

# THE GRAMOPHONE

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## QUARTERLY REVIEW OF RECORDS

By THE EDITOR

I HAVE already observed several times that the lot of a gramophone reviewer in these days is a hard one. Most of the music being recorded has been recorded in the old style already, and the level of the new recording is so high as to leave little opportunity for grumbles about technical defects. One of the signs of this dead level of excellency is a conspicuous decrease in the number of letters we receive blaming or praising the opinions in our paper.

The temptation of such a period of prosperity is to create some kind of a scene, because one has an uncomfortable feeling that things are going too well. With a horror of complacency I feel that this quarter I must somehow wring a protest out of somebody, and yet when I read through the list of records during the last three months I really don't know how to do it. A few months ago I attacked the organ with the feeling that I was hitting somebody bigger than

myself, but expecting nevertheless a body of devoted adherents to attack me. It is true a certain number of people wrote more in sorrow than in anger to correct my combativeness, but I could not feel that I had really roused anybody, and the competition I started with the object of defending the organ produced one of the most lymphatic exhibitions I have ever seen. The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings is jacobin compared with the defenders of the organ. In fact, it appears that people who like the organ are naturally mild and benevolent creatures, and incapable of any kind of violence, whether by word or deed.

The last time I wrote about records I said that the three H.M.V. discs of the *Casse-Noisette Suite*, conducted by Leopold Stokowski, provided the best orchestral records up to date. After three months I don't feel inclined to retract. I still think they are

the best, though it must be kept in mind that the *Casse-Noisette Suite* is comparatively easy to record sensational owing to the colour of the orchestration.

[Having written that, I receive a letter from a Yorkshire correspondent to say that he has just given himself the pleasure of smashing them to smithereens on account of the tempi. This sets a new standard of behaviour for critics, and we may presently expect a query in the popular press: Should critics carry six-shooters?]

I was almost equally impressed by the two waltzes under the same conductor which appeared in the middle of May, and when I remember the *Danse Macabre* I begin to wonder if His Master's Voice is heard more authentically on the other side of the Atlantic. I know that all these recordings were made about a year ago; in fact, I heard one of the waltzes on the Radio last winter when they were doing their imitation of an American programme. It is true that the empty concert-room echo is accentuated on the American recording, but there is a cleanliness and an individual quality about them which I don't think that any of the English orchestral recordings have yet achieved. At the same time, the showy orchestration of all these three pieces gives them an unfair handicap, and I should not attempt to come to any definite opinion about the respective merits of English and American orchestral recording until I had heard what they can do with some of the thick orchestration of Brahms or Schumann. Also I should like to hear how American recording can hold its own with ours in Wagner. Such a record (H.M.V.) as that of Albert Coates conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in the *Prelude* to Act 3 of the *Meistersinger* would take a bit of beating.

I particularly commend in the popular price orchestral records from the H.M.V. list the selection from *Turandot*, and a delightful performance of the *William Tell* overture, both by the Covent Garden Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent. From Columbia we had a very fine pair of discs of Bruno Walter conducting the overture of *The Flying Dutchman*, and the first records of a French orchestra—the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris—conducted by Phillippe Gaubert. A happy choice was made in *L'Apprenti Sorcier* of Paul Dukas, and would it be too much to express a hope that this will not be immediately duplicated elsewhere? I recognize that every company is bound to have the hundred most popular orchestral records in its own catalogue, but here is a good instance when duplication might be avoided, at any rate for the present. The only thing that marred the magnificent celebration of the Beethoven centenary was the failure to provide electrical recording of four of the quartets owing to absolutely unnecessary duplication. In the case of one of these the gap was supplied by the Polydor Company, and I may take this opportunity of correcting a slip when I said the A minor quartet was

played by the Amar combination; it was, as a matter of fact, played by the Deman quartet, and a very fine performance it was. We have, of course, non-electric recordings of the "Harp" quartet and of the C sharp minor; but I do wish that the Lener combination had given us the C sharp minor, Op. 131, instead of the quartet in E flat major, Op. 127, which was done by the Virtuoso; and then if the Flonzaley, instead of duplicating Op. 18, No. 2, had given us Op. 18, No. 5, which has not been done either electrically or non-electrically, we should not have had to deplore a rather depressing gap; and finally, if the Virtuoso combination had played the "Harp" quartet instead of the 3rd Rasoumoffsky, we should have been complete. I have had enough practical experience through the N.G.S. to know how tiresome armchair critics can be, and I realize how easy it is to ask why wasn't this or that done instead of something else, when there were several good reasons, which nobody knew anything about, for doing something else. Still, I cannot help feeling that on a unique occasion like the Beethoven centenary there might have been a little friendly collaboration between the great companies. While on the subject of Beethoven I must say I found the *Battle Symphony*, issued by Parlophone, a little depressing. Tchaikovsky did these things a great deal better; indeed, Mr. Ketelbey would do it a great deal better. However, amid all the duplication and re-duplication of the moment the Parlophone Company are to be congratulated on their originality. I have already called attention to their Dajos Bela Orchestra, which has now added to its strings some beautiful reed instruments and the richest trumpets I have yet heard. In fact, the whole combination is delightful and their choice of melodies excellent. They will be to new recording what Marek Weber was to old recording, and I advise all tune-loving readers to "follow" these records from the start. But don't play them on fibre; they are much better with steel and will stand the loudest needle. Another waltz record not to overlook is that from H.M.V. of the International Concert Orchestra playing *Estudiantina* and *The Skaters*. "Not presume to dictate," said Mr. Alfred Jingle, "but broiled fowl and mushrooms—capital thing!" Nor do I presume to dictate, but *Eton Boating Song*, *Lustige Bruder*, *Choristers*, *Valse Amoureuse* also capital things, particularly the *Eton Boating Song*, which perhaps the Dajos Bela Orchestra does not know. I hope that our friends in City Road will post a copy of this waltz to the leader. The Wagner records from Parlophone, under the baton of Siegfried Wagner (whose portrait on the outside of the bulletin looks exactly like Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer ten years ago), were all good this quarter. Indeed, the second part of the *Entry of the Gods* was about the best I have heard. Where the record failed was with the crash on the first side, which isn't much louder than a milkman rattling his cans outside a back door.

Indeed, I should not have been astonished to hear "Milk-o" instead of the roll of drums that follows. And the roll was very crumby. There is something oddly soft about Siegfried Wagner's conducting of his father's music. It is as if he was still suffering from having heard in youth too many criticisms of the noise it made. We can stand a great deal more noise nowadays. There was an interview with Herr Siegfried Wagner in which he claimed not to have heard any music composed during the last thirty years. This seems an excessive piety. However, many people might argue that Siegfried Wagner's method gets his father's music within the compass of the gramophone better than the conductors of a generation too familiar with internal combustion.

Other popular-priced records during the last quarter included that delicious *L'Arlésienne Suite* of Bizet from H.M.V., a capital *Trovatore* selection by the B.B.C. Orchestra from Columbia, the *Mignon Overture* and *Don Giovanni* from Parlophone, *The Flying Dutchman* and *Der Freischütz* Overtures from Vocalion conducted by Adrian Boult. All were good, and that's all I can say about them.

I had a letter from a valued correspondent this morning to ask why we had not reviewed the German discs recorded in Germany by H.M.V. and pressed in England. The answer is that we were not sent them for review. He writes with great enthusiasm of the orchestral discs, particularly the Overture of *Der Fledermaus*, which he puts forward as the best orchestral recording yet. Another set of orchestral discs which I have not received as I write this are those of Elgar's Second Symphony, issued by H.M.V. to celebrate the great composer's seventieth birthday. I heard the other day of a former cook of Sir Edward's who remembers with the intensest pleasure hearing him at work, and who now spends a good deal of her spare money in collecting the records of some of that work. I match her against Beethoven's cook, who would argue with him, and on one of whose quarrels with him was based a movement in the last quartet.

There have been several attractive instrumental records during the last quarter, and we had the thrill of the first Paderewski record by the new process. The Erard is perhaps the piano least suited to the gramophone in the present style of recording, though the sharpness of its quality used sometimes to score in old days. With either fibre or steel the harmonics are a little too insistent, but the personality of this enormously great pianist does unmistakably assert itself, and whether in the beautiful little Schubert *Impromptu* or in the Chopin *Etude* we are most positively aware of life. Another superlatively great performer, Pablo Casals, gave us *O Star of Eve* and *The Prize Song*. I should be inclined to nominate this 12 in. Red Label disc as a standard for all 'cellists who want to know how much fruit is allowed to their instruments. Under the bow of nearly every 'cellist I can think of, the lusciousness of this version of

*O Star of Eve* would have been too much for us. Diabetes is a dread malady for the 'cellist. Casals remains a nectarine where others turn into over-ripe Victoria plums. Another performance that appealed to me was that of George Bertram playing Chopin's *Ballade in A* on a couple of Parlophone discs. The *Ballade in A*, like Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, is one of the compositions that have wakened thousands of people into asking themselves whether after all there may not be something in "ops." I do not at the moment remember any other complete recordings for the gramophone. Another work one is delighted to welcome is his B flat minor Sonata, which has for its third movement the *Funeral March*. This is played by Mr. Arthur De Greef on three black H.M.V. discs with the *Grande Valse Brillante* on the sixth side. Note, too, a record by Sapellnikoff of Liszt's *Twelfth Hungarian Rhapsody* in the Vocalion list. The enthusiasm in the H.M.V. bulletin about Alfredo Rode's violin playing is justified by his first record—a 10 in. plum gathered at the right moment. And the other violin record I would specially recommend is the Tossy Spiwakowsky one from Parlophone of the Paganini sonatas.

There have been several outstanding choral discs this quarter, both operatic and ecclesiastical, but I must give the absolute palm to the H.M.V. record of Mendelssohn's *Hear my Prayer* and *Oh, for the wings of a dove*, with Master Lough as soloist and the choir and organ of the Temple Church. I am quite sure that no boy's voice has ever been recorded nearly as well as this, and I am equally sure that I have never heard such a beautiful one. The glory of a boy's voice is so brief, hardly less fugacious, indeed, than spring flowers, that I do hope some more records will be made of Master Lough. Sir Otto Niemeyer had a lovely voice as a boy, and I wish that he could have been recorded, for I cannot help thinking that the solemnity of the Bank of England, over which he now presides, would be beautifully lightened by the sound of Master Niemeyer singing *Cherry Ripe* as I heard him sing it when we were at school. Imagine the effect of playing such a record when Sir Otto and Mr. Winston Churchill were wrestling with the question of the French debt. I am convinced that it would have meant an extra half per cent. for the British Treasury. The London Editor had a beautiful boy's voice, and a record of Master Stone singing *Oh, for the wings of a dove* would soften the heart even of the Expert Committee, so that they would turn from Balmain's Big Bertha and stand, needles in hand, entranced. However, we have Master Lough, who, after his first performance, goes straight into the classic shelves and the company of singers like Caruso. Colonial papers please copy, because here is an authentic piece of England.

Of the operatic choruses the most impressive are the two from *Turandot*, but I am sorry to see that the price has risen from 4s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. I am hoping

that this black H.M.V. disc is an exception, due perhaps to some question of royalties. The other H.M.V. record of the La Scala Chorus in numbers from *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* is published at 4s. 6d., and this is a splendid record which I heartily recommend. The La Scala Chorus also appears in the Columbia bulletins, and I notice sadly that here the charge is 4s. 6d. for a 10 in. disc. Everybody knows how delightful the *Chorus of Cigarette Girls* from *Carmen* is, but I expect few readers will have heard the chorus on the other side from that early opera of Verdi's—*Lombardi*. This is as soothing as a lullaby, and my untutored ear finds it very pleasant.

Now for the vocal solos of the quarter, which somehow or other are unusually difficult to criticise. First of all, for those in the H.M.V. list. On reading back through the bulletins the first I come across is a 10 in. red label of Margaret Sheridan. I wrote without enthusiasm about her operatic record of the previous quarter, and it is pleasant to be able to write with real enthusiasm of her performance in these Irish songs. Quite delightful. A first-class shanty record of John Goss is about the best he has given us yet, and to save space I shall just put the number, B.2420. Jeritza singing *Agatha's Prayer* from *Der Freischütz* did not thrill me much; but Ansseau's performance in two arias from Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* is magnificent. I did not care so much as usual for Miss Suddaby in *Where the bee sucks* and *Cuttin' Rushes*. Nor did I greatly care for Miss Anne Thrusfield in *L'heure exquise*. I preferred *Clair de Lune* on the other side. There are two beautiful Mozart discs by Elisabeth Schumann, of which I much preferred the 12 in. with *Deh, vieni* on one side and an exquisite air from *Il Re Pastore* on the other. The love duet from *Otello*, sung by Madame Spani and Zenatello, was good. Madame Spani gave me the same kind of thrill as Destinn, but Zenatello was not quite satisfying.

Of her two Columbia records I preferred Miss Eva Turner in the arias from *Aïda* and *La Gioconda*. Stabile is a great dramatic baritone, and the two Columbia discs of his are impressive, but the problem of the purchaser is acutely complicated by the issue from Parlophone of another Stabile record (10 in., 4s. 6d.) in which he sings the same aria from *Falstaff*—*Dell'onore*—as on the Columbia disc. I think the Parlophone record does more justice to the singer's voice and style, and the Columbia record to the accompaniment, so there you are. The next complication is getting *Ay-Ay-Ay* on a Columbia record by D'Alessio and in the Parlophone list the same song by Emilio Vendrill. I think I prefer the Columbia, but I don't like either of them so well as Fleta's performance on H.M.V. Then there is Kiepura on a 12 in. Parlophone at 6s. 6d., singing *Questa o quella* and *La Donna è mobile*. This should have been a 10 in. disc. The young singer would be shocked to see a concert hall look as empty as this disc does on both sides. I like the young singer in these airs from *Rigoletto*

better than I liked him in Puccini, and I do feel that he gives us something rather different from the other fashionable tenors of the moment. At the same time I profoundly agree with Mr. Herman Klein that the present Italian style is thoroughly bad. The sooner every Italian tenor singing at the moment gives up competing with the Bull of Bashan the better it will be for us. Gigli bellows Toselli's Serenade (H.M.V.) as if he wanted to break the windows of the house. A ridiculous performance. Italian singing is simply going to pieces under bad masters. Composers, of course, are partly to blame by drowning the voice with the orchestra, but the brainlessness of the singers is the chief cause. Enormously as I admire and love Verdi's *Otello*, I am beginning to wonder whether he did his country a service by writing it. I should like to play over to the old gentleman himself the records of this quarter, for I believe if he had heard them he might have produced even another opera after *Falstaff*. I never thought I should live to exalt a French tenor above Italians, but the best tenor record of this last three months has been that of Georges Thill from Columbia. He gives us an aria from *Traviata* which has not been oversung, and another from *Herodiade*, and if I were going to bust 6s. 6d. on one vocal record this quarter I should invest in this. In the special Parlophone issue of what they call "royalty" records, besides those I have mentioned of Italian singers, there is a particularly beautiful 12 in. disc of Lotte Lehmann singing Mendelssohn's *Wings of Song* and *Von ewiger Liebe* of Brahms. I was rather disappointed in the Parlophone *Meistersinger* quintet, but then I always am disappointed in records of the *Meistersinger* quintet, and if it is possible to whisper in print I should like to whisper that I am not so fond of the quintet itself as no doubt I ought to be. Before I forget to mention them, let me say that the two Irmler Choir records are particularly beautiful, including as they do two chorales of Bach, an old Dutch *Ave Maria*, and Mozart's *Ave Verum*.

I did not find anything particularly interesting among the Vocalion vocal records, though there was a good McEachern. On going through my records again I find I have forgotten to mention a really magnificent performance of *Wotan's Farewell* by Alexander Kipnis and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra. This seems to me easily the best I have heard, and the only one in which the singer does not appear to die under the repeated assaults of the orchestra.

For various reasons these bi-monthly or quarterly reviews of mine fail to mention records which are well worthy of mention and praise. I will offer a guinea's worth of records every six months, in November and May, to the reader who, not later than the first of October and the first of April, finds for me the best three records of any kind I have omitted to mention during the preceding half-year.

Of what, for want of a better word, we call light

records during the last quarter, I vote for the two discs of the Singing Sophomores published by Columbia, but the song of this kind I enjoyed most was one called *Muddy Waters*, which is to be found in the Brunswick and Parlophone lists, though I regret to say that neither company has sent me a copy. I particularly regret being deprived of Miss Vaughn Le Leath, for whom I have a great admiration, though I suppose I should get tired of her if I had too much of her just as I get tired of all the other singers of this genre.

The triumphant recording of the nightingale and of the bird-song at dawn in an English garden by the great H.M.V. sound-catcher (the thought of whose progress through Great Britain fills me with awe) is probably world-famous by now. It really is a most astonishing record, and though the bulletin does not mention it, the far-off barking of a dog in the nightingale performance, though the effect was doubtless unintended, added extraordinarily to the atmosphere, and is a belated tribute to His Own Voice. I look forward to playing this record on a cold January morning and providing for myself an illusion of April. I wish I could get the sound-catcher down here to record the curlews at night above the sound of the waves, and I recommend as another recording, to cheer us all up in winter, the buzz of insects on a hot summer's noon, the sound of a distant lawn mower, and perhaps a cow moo-ing in the distance. I am not joking. These atmospheric records would be a tonic in winter.

Of band records my vote goes to the Vocalion issues of the Life Guards Band, and the selection of *The Belle of New York* by the Grenadiers issued by Columbia.

Chamber music was scarce apart from Beethoven. Still, Columbia, always kind, managed to fit in a lovely Mozart Quartet, and Parlophone provided a couple of snippets from Mendelssohn's Trio in D.

Rather late in the day I want to call our readers' attention to a collection of Sir Richard Terry's stimulating essays—*On Music's Borders* (published by Ernest Benn, 15s.). It is full of all sorts of interesting out-of-the-way information, and reflects perfectly the personality of a man whom I should have supposed to be an admiral with a taste for music, if I didn't know him to be a musician with a passion for the sea.

I may also remind readers that Mr. Balmain has made arrangements to give them an opportunity of acquiring his instrument, which they can visit at Messrs. Murdoch's, 481, Oxford Street; and, by the way, we have arranged for a stock of the N.G.S. records to be kept there, too, so that anyone who wants half an hour's rest after shopping in Selfridge's can listen to good music on "Big Bertha," and can go on his way refreshed with an extra parcel of records to carry.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.

### Reviews

The Editor's Quarterly Review includes references to certain June records which arrived too late for notice by the London staff of reviewers in the last issue, and are therefore dealt with independently in the Analytical Notes and First Reviews this month. It is only new readers that are likely to be dismayed by divergent views on the same records expressed in different parts of the same issue of THE GRAMOPHONE: and it is only new readers that need to be told that Captain H. T. Barnett, who writes about the New Poor Records every month, is a freelance to whom from very early days THE GRAMOPHONE has gladly offered a rostrum. He would be the last to claim any official sanction for his views on current records or for his Gramophone Tips when they are at variance with the opinions of our reviewing staff or of our Expert Committee; but he has a large following among readers of THE GRAMOPHONE, *Musical Opinion* and *The Phonograph* (U.S.A.), who value his periodical contributions on gramophonic matters.

### The Gramophone in School

With his article this month Mr. W. R. Anderson brings to an end the important series which he arranged for the benefit of those who are concerned with the educational side of the gramophone. It was started at the instance of some of our readers who asked for definite and authoritative help; and from correspondence received it is evident that other readers have found the articles very useful. But the series should be brought to the notice of every teacher who uses a gramophone for instructional purposes, and since it would be too sanguine to imagine that this object has been achieved, we shall be glad to send copies of THE GRAMOPHONE containing the whole series, seven articles, post free to any address for 6s.

### Wagner

Similarly there may be Wagnerites who have not read the complete series of Mr. Peter Latham's articles and who would like to have the eight numbers of THE GRAMOPHONE which cover the whole ground as it is never likely to be covered again—real loci classici for Wagner records. They can be had for 6s. 6d. post free.

### Gilbert and Sullivan

The continuation of Mr. N. M. Cameron's article on records of the Savoy Operas, which appeared last month, is postponed to the August number.

### Holidays

"K.K." is on holiday. The first music that he heard on arriving in Italy, the land of song, was "Valencia", the first heard in Switzerland was voices upraised in the Ninth Symphony, rehearsing for the Swiss Beethoven celebration.

Mr. Basil Maine is taking his place this month in the orchestral reviewing.



### BINDING CASES FOR VOL. IV.

The bound copies of Vol. IV. (£1 post free) look very well, in black cloth with gold lettering as usual. They contain all the letterpress, the coloured portraits of Wagner and Beethoven, the index, all the covers at the end—and the minimum of advertisements. This will be sent in exchange for the unbound copies for 11s. post free: or the binding case and index can be supplied for 4s. 6d.

This announcement slightly modifies what was said on p. 35 of the June number, because readers who really want to keep all the advertisements would be well advised to use two of the red spring back binding cases rather than to attempt to have the whole bound in one volume.

# THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE SINGER

(Continued)

By HERMAN KLEIN

## The Royal Opera Season

LOOKING back for a moment at the earlier half of the season which has just come to a close, two points occur to me that are worthy of attention. One is the extraordinary hold that German opera still possesses over a certain section of the London public; the other is the variable merit, according to current criticism, of performances which are costly enough alike to the management and the opera-goer to attain the highest level of perfection. For four solid weeks, bar Saturdays and Sundays, Covent Garden was crammed to repletion by audiences that displayed frenetic enthusiasm whenever the rules permitted them to do so. Apparently the house could have been sold out twice over on a sufficient number of occasions to have justified the addition of at least another fortnight to the German campaign of a month. So far results showed a clear and substantial step in the right direction.

As regards the question of excellence, I am of opinion that such shortcomings as were emphatically stressed in a few leading organs of the Press were due less to the lack of capable artists than the inadequate time for preparation and rehearsal, which is the permanent curse of these annual assemblages of heterogeneous executive elements at our principal opera house. The same artists on their respective "native heaths" would be allotted as many weeks for rehearsing the big works of Wagner and Mozart as they get days here. It is unreasonable, therefore, to expect an equivalent degree of polish from the ensemble, with or without the co-operation of an orchestra which is variable in itself, thanks to the constant abuse of what is known as the "deputy" system. That is precisely the difference between representations of *The Ring*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Tristan und Isolde*, etc., as we hear them at Covent Garden and the same works as given with practically identical casts at Bayreuth, Munich, Dresden or Berlin.

Take, for example, the performance of *Fidelio*, Beethoven's great and only opera, which was supposed to shine in the reflected glory of a Centenary observance. I have witnessed so many which were superior to it from almost every point of view that I am not sure whether it is worth while to say anything about it now. But, dealing only with the vocal side, I still feel inclined to ask if it was really impossible to bring over a less ordinary Leonora and Florestan than Hélène Wildbrunn and Fritz Krauss. The soprano, according to "information received," was formerly

at Stuttgart, but now "divides her time between the Stadtoper at Vienna and the Städtische Oper in Berlin, where Herr Bruno Walter is the conductor" and who conducted the performance to which I am now referring. She owns a good voice certainly, and displays dramatic feeling both in her singing and acting; but she has no real power, no magnetism, no impressive accents of tragedy such as were revealed by the great Fidelios of the past—Tietjens, Lilli Lehmann, Ternina, Thérèse Malten, to name only a few of the illustrious ones I have myself seen. It would not have been fair, of course, to expect genius like theirs; but I was disappointed for all that, because the magnificent climax of the prison scene—one of the grandest moments in the whole range of opera—evoked no sort of thrill beyond that inherent in the drama itself and the noble music which illustrates it. It must be rather a poor Fidelio who cannot "send cold shivers down your back" at that crucial instant when the devoted wife points her revolver at Pizarro's wicked countenance, and the sound of Beethoven's marvellous trumpet-call is heard from beyond the castle walls.

The tenor has difficult music to sing in this opera, I admit, but too frequently does one find it entrusted to artists who are barely equal to the task of getting through it; and I am bound to confess that Herr Fritz Krauss was one of these. I wonder whether an accomplished singer like Léo Slezák has ever thought the part of Florestan good enough for a refined specimen of the *Heldentenor*. If not, why not? The feature of the evening for me was the quartet "in canon" in the opening scene—that sublime yet simple piece of inspired music which always sets my heart off beating "pit-a-pat" with the same suppressed excitement that pervades the feelings of the four singers. Hereabouts I began to discover that Lotte Schöne had a very sweet, charming voice and delightful personality for the part of Marcellina; also that Wilhelm Gombert sang well and did not offend by his persistence as the dairnsel's lover, Jaquino. On the other hand, the voice of Otto Helgers was not really heavy enough for the bass music of Rocco (shades of Carl Formes and Foli!), while Gotthold Ditter merely achieved the conventional shouting in the outbursts of that angry gentleman, Don Pizarro. The German chorus was competent; the English orchestra up to the average, but no more. Bruno Walter is an admirable conductor, but he cannot work

miracles in the time at his disposal; and that limitation, I fear, is nobody's fault in particular.

### THE " HUGUENOTS " REVIVAL.

Meyerbeer still has his enemies, and they are mostly of the implacable sort. I did not expect them to respond very gracefully, if at all, to the movement that was initiated in THE GRAMOPHONE so long ago as September, 1925, with my articles on "The Treasures of Meyerbeer." Nevertheless, their attitude, whether negative or positive, could not prevent the ultimate working of the leaven. The good that men do lives longer after them than the evil. The unfair, because untruthful, attacks of Wagner on the brother composer who had striven to help him began to be seen through at last; and, although the libel had had a start of fifty years, its influence was too false to endure for ever. Last year some of the leading musical writers began openly expressing the opinion, confirmatory of my own, that Meyerbeer ought now to be given another trial in this country. The result was the reappearance of *The Huguenots* in the current Covent Garden prospectus after an absence of 15 years, and in due course its revival before a curious and expectant audience, which included the King and Queen, on May 30th, the opening night of the Italian half of the season. Owing to this latter circumstance, and also to the fact that the cast was almost entirely from the fair land of Italy, the opera was given under its once-familiar but not very euphonious title of *Gli Ugonotti*.

The Fates, however, were not kind. As things turned out, the test was not made under satisfactory conditions. It will be remembered that in my articles I alluded more than once to the executive obstacles with which Meyerbeer's music bristles; the command of the important traditions that are a *sine quâ non* for its proper rendering; the need for many stage and orchestral rehearsals (in Paris and Berlin they used to devote at least six months to putting on a Meyerbeer opera); and finally, the presence and control of a conductor possessing all the experience and sympathy necessary for his task. To anticipate a full realization of all these essentials would, of course, have been to indulge in Utopian fatuity. I was not quite sanguine enough for that, knowing as I do the difficulties under which luxurious grand opera labours in our midst. But, doubts notwithstanding, I had ventured to hope for a better performance than this. I will be perfectly frank about it. It was almost from first to last a grievous disappointment; and perhaps its most serious shortcoming was its consistent dullness, its lack of verve, spirit and inspiration. Where it should have been ruthlessly cut—as, for instance, in the first Act, which is always considerably shortened—a great deal too much was left in. On the other hand, in the second Act, beneath the Castle of Chenonceaux, the chorus, with dance of *baigneuses*, was omitted, together with the trio for the Queen, the

Page and the Dama d'Onore, and also a large part of the finale. The third Act was somewhat livelier and more coherent; but even there inadequate stage management made certain incidents appear ridiculous. Alas for the value of youthful present-day criticism! One or two of the notices that I read in our sensational evening papers made poor Meyerbeer responsible for all these and other *lâches*, complaining *inter alia* that the operatic treatment of such a big historical subject was beyond his powers (*sic*). One of these gentlemen, indeed, went so far as to declare that my friend, Dr. Vaughan Williams (who was there as the guest of another critic, by the way), would have been able—witness, *Hugh the Drover!*—to make a far better job of it. Well, well!

As regards the purely vocal side of the representation, the plain truth is that only two members of the long cast actually rose to the level of the occasion—one a German artist, one an Italian. I will not say that Alexander Kipnis (whose splendid record of Wotan's *Abschied* I reviewed last month) has quite the deep *basso profondo* notes for a perfect Marcello; but he sang the *Piff, paff* air with immense vigour and character, while the richness of his voice told with fine effect in the *Pré aux Clercs* duet with Valentina. He also looked his part well, as did that other fine singer, Mariano Stabile, in the rôle of de Nevers, to which only a baritone of high class can impart the requisite distinction. It enabled Signor Stabile to show how remarkably versatile he is, for an embodiment further removed in character from either Falstaff or Iago it would be hard to imagine. He sang admirably and acted the noble-minded Count to the life.

The earliest (and also latest) of the evening's disappointments was the Raoul di Nangis of John O'Sullivan. His records had prepared me for a tremolo, but not for a tone so thin and unsympathetic in all but the highest register. His high B flat and C are vibrant, clear, ringing notes, and yet the "bridge" leading from the medium to the head is distinctly dull. Perhaps nervousness interfered with his rendering of the *Romanza* in the first Act, because he sang so much better in the duel septet and the final duet with Valentina; but he is a poor actor, anyhow, and in the scene with the Queen his comedy was as lifeless as his singing. The ladies were also palpably nervous on making their débuts. Bianca Seacciati proved an efficient Valentina but not a great one; dramatic but lacking in charm; a clever singer whose organ will not stand the slightest forcing. In the duet with Marcello she omitted the high C with the descending scale. As Urbano, Albertina dal Monte betrayed a throaty production, and I found nothing to admire in either of the Page's songs. Anna Maria Guglielmetti did tolerable justice to the music of Marguerite de Valois in a technical sense, but without the added value of distinction or finish; while Fernando Autori put fitting energy into the rôle

of San Bris. To Bellezza's conducting I have already referred, and about the general performance there is no need to say more.

#### "AIDA."

After Meyerbeer, Verdi once more. The choice of opéras for a season like this, as I have often observed, is largely dictated by the presence or calibre, or both, of the available artists. Wagner, of course, requires his own particular interpreters; and the great German singers who can do him justice can generally do justice to Verdi as well, though it is far from being the same thing the other way about. Thus, when the Teutonic portion of the season had reached its close, quite a number of its protagonists remained here for a few days to help to carry on the labours of Part II. (I could not help wishing that there had been more of them in *The Huguenots*, but—enough said.) I did not hear *Rigoletto* at all, though reliable opinion would have it that Maria Ivogün was still out of form and out of tune, too, pretty frequently. The non-appearance of Formichi was strange but not altogether surprising. It was also disappointing for a good many people who love a huge voice in a *Rigoletto*, and who cannot perceive that Mariano Stabile is a fine interpreter of other rôles besides Falstaff. Some found nice things to say about both the Dukes, Dino Borgioli and Tom Burke, especially the latter, who is probably a much better vocalist to-day than he was when he made his rather sensational début with Melba in 1919 as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. The new Italian conductor, Fornarini by name, made a highly favourable impression; but he was not entrusted with *Aida*.

The rendering of this masterpiece made amends for a good many shortcomings. It was the finest we have had at Covent Garden in recent years. What is also of importance to my readers as well as myself, it served to confirm opinions already expressed in these columns concerning three or four prominent singers of gramophone records whom I had never listened to through any other medium. First and foremost, Sigrid Onégin. In voice, in dramatic instinct, in physique and personal charm, she is all and more than I pictured her; while her attractive qualities made one marvel even more than usual at Radamès's strange taste in preferring Aïda to such an Amneris. The slight blemishes of style noticeable in her records disappeared altogether on the stage. The critical verdict concerning the Swedish mezzo-contralto was unanimous. She left all the slurring tendencies to Grete Stückgold, who indulged them with much generosity whilst presenting an Aïda of considerable originality—a veritable "child of the desert" in a constant state of fright, a primitive creature with startled eyes and hair permanently on end. She used her sympathetic voice artistically, but without any notable power. This last quality was, however, sufficiently demonstrated by Sigrid Onégin and Aureliano Pertile, who made Covent Garden ring with

the same gigantic tone-vibration that one hears in their records. The new tenor also justified his reputation as a genuine *robusto* with a pleasing, unforced tone and broad, manly style. I admired his acting less, but altogether he stands far above the current Italian level. Emil Schipper shared with Pertile and Grete Stückgold the honours of the Nile scene; he was a picturesque and forceful Amonasro. Alexander Kipnis also gained distinction as the High Priest. I will not say that he approached Edouard de Reszke in this part any more nearly than as Marcel; but he certainly has a splendid organ, and I endorse every word I wrote about his singing in his record of Wotan's *Abschied*. Bellezza, conducting finely throughout, made the *ensemble* of the second Act a tremendous thing; and the dancing of Karsavina in the ballet of that scene was a gem of Egyptian posturing and quaint Eastern grace. Altogether, then, a very memorable *Aïda*.

#### THE PRODUCTION OF "TURANDOT."

There were three performances of Puccini's posthumous opera; and I was present at the second, on June 13th. That was one more than poor Maria Jeritza was able to attend; for, as ill-fortune would have it, she was not well enough to fulfil her engagement to come to London. She was to be replaced by the Turandot of the first performance at Rome, Bianca Scacciati, whom I had expected to share these performances with Jeritza. But at the second we had, quite unexpectedly, a soprano with a finer voice than either of these in the person of Florence Easton, an Englishwoman who—married to the American tenor, Francis MacLennan—has lately been working her way up to the top of the tree at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. Her success in the new opera amounted to a positive triumph. A striking figure in her gorgeous Chinese robes, she enacted the repellent Turandot with power, and skilfully portrayed the nuances of the gradual change that love effects in the nature of that unnatural princess. Above all, she displayed a far finer voice and more resourceful art than those of the Florence Easton whom I heard in *Butterfly*, both in New York and at Covent Garden, nearly 20 years ago. How she now holds her own with the giants of the Metropolitan it is easy to understand. I especially admired her beautiful high notes.

*Turandot* is in some respects Puccini's finest work. I would say the very finest if the libretto enfolded fewer horrors and if the composer's pen had not "dropped from his hand," as Toscanini put it, before the completion of the final duet, which I find tiresome as shaped by Signor Alfani. But the stage tableaux are magnificent and some of the ensembles very striking, while the clever music allotted to the three ministerial worthies, Ping, Pang, and Pong, afford alike relief, amusement, and subject for admiration. These were splendidly acted and sung by Ernesto

Badini, Luigi Cilla, and Giuseppe Nessi. As the Unknown Prince, the tenor Francesco Merli even improved upon his record singing of this music. He gave a capital rendering of the soliloquy *Nessun dorma* in the third Act, and sang well also in the scenes with the unhappy slave-girl Liù, who had a sympathetic delineator in Lotte Schöne. Altogether *Turandot* was adequately cast, lavishly mounted, and worthily performed under the able direction of Vincenzo Bellezza; and whenever it can be equally well given the opera will be sure of a no less enthusiastic welcome. The production, which owed much to the picturesque lighting and stage management devised by Mr. Charles Moor, was a big feather in the cap of the London Opera Syndicate—by far the biggest they have yet earned.

#### " IL TROVATORE."

Early Verdi has come into fashion again, and so much the better for all concerned. Until June 14th the once hackneyed and despised *Trovatore* had not been sung in Italian at Covent Garden since 1905, on which occasion Riccardo Stracciari made his débüt as the wicked Conte di Luna. I had not heard it there myself (being in New York) since ten years before that—Augustus Harris's last season but one; so no wonder it came almost as a novelty to contemporary opera-goers. The present revival owed its excellence to careful all-round preparation and the exceptionally good interpretation of the three leading characters by Frida Leider, Maria Olczewska, and Aureliano Pertile, who used their fine voices with irresistible effect in the music of Leonora, Azucena, and Manrico. The Count of Armando Borgioli stood upon a somewhat lower plane. He has a good telling baritone, with great power in the middle register, but sings without much control or command of colour and refinement. Pertile is by a long way the best Manrico I have heard since Tamagno, and perhaps the best Italian tenor that has sung here since Caruso. He may be less "electrifying" in *Di quella pira* than either of those departed stars, but I think neither of them could have phrased *Ah si, ben mio* with more intelligence, grace, and charm. It is a real pleasure to listen to him. The Ferrando (not Fernando, as they spelt it in the programme) of Autori was unusually dramatic, and the Ruiz (Cilla) and Inez (Kathlyn Hilliard) were also worthy of a strong cast. A gratifying feature revealed itself in the work of the chorus. Instead of shouting everything in the customary manner, they positively sang *p* and *pp* where they had to, and thus produced some delicate effects that invested the choral writing of Verdi's first "manner" with an entirely novel character. For this and the crisp, spirited playing of the "big guitar" accompaniments Vincenzo Bellezza deserved all praise. It was quite a delightful evening.

HERMAN KLEIN.

## NATIONAL GRAMOPHONIC SOCIETY NOTES

[All communications should be addressed to the Secretary, N.G.S., 58, Frith Street, London, W. 1.]

#### *Meeting*

All members are invited to attend an informal meeting of the Society at Murdoch's Salons, 481, Oxford Street, London, W.1, on Thursday next, July 7th, at 7 p.m., to hear some of the new records of Bax, Ravel, and Dvorák which, it is hoped, will be available for distribution very shortly afterwards. No coupons or tickets of admission are necessary, and friends of members or readers of THE GRAMOPHONE who are interested in the work of the Society will be very welcome so far as accommodation allows. Mr. P. Wilson has kindly offered to give us a short talk on "Fashions and Fallacies" during the course of the evening.

#### *Bax Oboe Quintet*

Especial attention is drawn to the article on Arnold Bax elsewhere in this month's GRAMOPHONE and to the portrait of the composer, from the series of photographs of modern British composers by Herbert Lambert, of Bath, which is reproduced by courtesy of Messrs. Murdoch. He is no longer among the entirely neglected composers, and his approval of the records which Leon Goossens (to whom the quintet was dedicated) and the International String Quartet have made for us is very valuable. The first and last movements occupy one side each and the slow movement (which at a first hearing in the London office the composer thought was taken a shade *too* slowly) two sides. An analysis of the work, written by Peter Latham, is in the Society's new List of Records.

#### *Ravel Quartet*

These four records have been made by M. André Mangeot and his colleagues with the utmost care. The work is one which the International String Quartet is eminently suited to record with a degree of real authority, and it is high time that a complete version of the quartet should be given to the world. Significantly there has been a big advance demand for sets of these records from Cambridge, whose audiences well know the International String Quartet's interpretation of the work; and there is little doubt that the Bax and the Ravel, together six records, will be one of the most successful and popular "batches" issued by the Society. The first movement of Ravel's Sonatine for piano—a composition of the same year as the quartet—is played by Miss Kathleen Long on the odd side. Probably many members heard it played at 2 L.O the other Sunday afternoon by Miss Yvonne Arnaud, a charming performance. The Spencer Dyke Quartet were playing for the B.B.C. on the Friday evening before, and on the evening before that there was an astonishingly moving orchestral version of Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht* by a Light Symphony Orchestra under Hermann Scherchen.

#### *Dvorák's Piano Quintet*

Dvorák's Piano Quintet in A, op. 81, recorded by Ethel Bartlett and the Spencer Dyke Quartet, will be ready for distribution at the same time as the Ravel and Bax. It is highly advisable for every member to send a postcard to the Secretary, confirming or registering a desire to have all or any of the records when ready. Bax two records, Ravel four, Dvorák five—eleven records in all. The tenth side of the Dvorák records will be filled with one of Joseph Speaight's Shakespeare Fairy Characters.

# My Suggestions for getting Beethoven Records

By THE EDITOR

I DON'T think it is too much to claim that the most practical celebration of the centenary of any artist was the celebration by the recording companies of Beethoven, and whatever the great man may have thought about his future place in the estimation of humanity it is quite certain that in none of his wild solitary walks, in none of his rages and despairs, in none of his moments of exultation and confidence, did he ever imagine anything like the gramophone. It is, I think, a happy augury for the future of musical appreciation that the new recording, the revolutionary effect of which we are at last beginning to realize, should have made sufficient strides in time to give an adequate reproduction of the great man's work. Now that the recording companies have done their duty it behoves the man in the street to do his duty. In this article I want to be a man in the street myself, and to indicate to my companions the order in which I think they will like the various works offered to them. I am not going to assume that they can buy some sixty or seventy pounds' worth of records to-morrow, but I am going to assume that they will set out with the intention of adding slowly or quickly, according as they can afford it, to their collection of Beethoven's music, provided that their first experiments with what I recommend are successful. It is impossible for me to interest or propitiate those who consider that they already know a great deal about Beethoven's music, nor can I attempt to offer any kind of course that would satisfy the musical educationist, nor do I propose to recognise any man's prejudice in favour of the piano, or the orchestra, or the string quartet. Very well then, if I were to be asked what, out of all Beethoven wrote, I should recommend first to the man in the street, I think I should choose the *Waldstein Sonata*. This particular piece has not been electrically recorded, but there is a very good performance of it by Frederic Lamond on two black H.M.V. discs. I am sure that if a man, after hearing this three times, failed to enjoy it, there would not be much use in recommending him to go any further. When my man in the street has assimilated the *Waldstein Sonata* I recommend him to get hold of another H.M.V. disc on one side of which is a *Rondino* on a theme of Beethoven played by Kreisler. I don't want him to buy this; I am sure his dealer will let him go into a corner of the shop and play it over to himself a couple of times, and I am equally sure that it will haunt his memory so much that he will be saying to himself that he must persevere with Beethoven's music. Now I hesitate between the *Fifth Symphony* and the *Violin Concerto*, and in choosing the *Fifth*

*Symphony* next I am influenced by the fact that the concerto, in spite of new recording, is still an unfavourable medium for showing off the orchestra. The first thing to do is to choose between the Columbia version conducted by Weingartner and the H.M.V. version conducted by Sir Landon Ronald and, without very strong feeling either way, I am going to declare in favour of the H.M.V. version. I can hardly be expected to say anything valuable about the *Fifth Symphony* at this date, and it may be that in recommending it as the first big work to attempt I am influenced by my own experience and my knowledge of its general popularity above the others. Most of us who enjoy Beethoven have begun with the *Fifth Symphony*, because the *Fifth Symphony* has always been played more often than any other. One of the first things we remember about it is being told that the opening represents fate knocking at the door, and I expect that explanation will have power to waylay the imagination of youth for a long time to come. Nowadays it seems to me rather silly, but I have got to remember that once it sounded like a revelation. After the *Fifth Symphony* I have no hesitation in recommending the *Violin Concerto*, of which, fortunately, we have a performance by Kreisler which may never be superseded. The Concerto also has a knocking story attached to it, for it is related that Beethoven heard somebody knocking four times on a door down the street where he was living at the time, and that the four opening drum taps repeated by the horns, which begin the first movement, were a translation of these four knocks given by that midnight wayfarer. The whole of the first movement is so obviously melodious as almost to be called "catchy." The slow movement which follows is much more elusive but not less melodious, and the Concerto winds up with just such a gay dance as the man in the street might have danced when he was a boy in the nursery. The next symphony I recommend to tackle is the *Seventh*, of which Columbia has published a splendid version conducted by Weingartner. The *Seventh Symphony* was called by Wagner the apotheosis of the dance. I should prefer to call it the apotheosis of rhythm. If anybody can listen to the second movement without wanting to march about all over the world he had better exchange his gramophone for a Ford.

Now it is time to think about chamber music, because, as I must have said a hundred times already in these columns, nobody who is not using his gramophone to give himself the privilege of listening to chamber music is getting full value out of his instrument. The man in the street really must exercise a

little faith in this matter of chamber music; he must have a little confidence in his own good taste. Every day almost I receive a letter from somebody or other telling me that he has succumbed to the delights of chamber music, and all these people are not wasting stamps to tell me something they don't mean. Many of them have remained in a state of obstinate prejudice for years, but because I have been right in what I said about some wretched tenor they admired or disliked, they have asked themselves if I might not be right about their capacity for enjoying chamber music. Many have approached it as they would have approached a rather nasty medicine recommended for their good, and if ever I am tempted to feel complacent it is when I remember that dozens of people who followed my advice have given themselves a pleasure which they had hitherto supposed to be the preserve of the privileged few.

I often hear that one of the difficulties of gramophone dealers during the recent flood of Beethoven records has been to know what to recommend to their customers, who having read a great deal about Beethoven in the daily Press have felt that they ought to do something about Beethoven themselves. If I had a shop and somebody asked me what Beethoven quartet to buy first I should recommend the *Fourth in C minor*. This quartet is all melody of the gayest kind and contains no slow movement, and has been recorded for Columbia by the Lener Quartet. After this first taste of string quartets I think the man in the street should go back to the piano and get the *Moonlight Sonata* and the *Pathetic Sonata*. The version of the former I should buy is that played by Evelyn Howard-Jones for Columbia, and of the other, between the H.M.V. played by Lamond and the Columbia played by Murdoch, it really depends more on whether you like a blue label or a black one for your discs. For the *Kreutzer Sonata*, which is for violin and piano, you may choose the version in the Columbia list played by Sammons and Murdoch if you always use steel needles, but if you use fibre then perhaps the H.M.V. version played by Isolde Menges and De Greef is better. Now I shall make what many will consider a surprising suggestion when I recommend the *Trio in B flat* played by Sammons, Squire and Murdoch for Columbia. However, in spite of the late opus number it wears, this Trio seems to me one of the easiest of Beethoven's chamber compositions to enjoy at once. It has the same kind of rhythmic force which makes the *Seventh Symphony* so invigorating. Now I think I should see what Beethoven could do with the piano and orchestra by getting the *Emperor Concerto*, which is played by Wilhelm Backhaus on black H.M.V. discs. This is full of the rhythm of marching armies, and leads up to the moment for wanting the *Third Symphony*. Of the two best versions I have no hesitation in recommending the H.M.V. conducted by Albert Coates rather than the Columbia conducted by Sir Henry

Wood. The man in the street is now in a heroic mood, and perhaps he is ripe for the *Ninth Symphony*. Here again I have no hesitation in recommending the H.M.V. version conducted by Coates before the Columbia version conducted by Weingartner. The *Ninth Symphony* is by far the least successful of the Columbia recordings, having been done when they were still wrestling rather obviously with the metallic quality of the strings.

I suppose that to recommend the crowning achievement of Beethoven before so much of his earlier work will strike the more sophisticated lover of music as illogical and even absurd, but I have a feeling that my advice is practical, and on reading through what I have written the only doubt I have is whether I should not have recommended the *Eighth Symphony* (best on Columbia) to follow immediately upon the *Fourth Quartet*. The *Eighth Symphony*, which is the shortest of all, is another apotheosis of rhythm, and what I have aimed at is to mark my progress through Beethoven up to this point with a rhythmic beat. To be sure, I have interposed a meditative piece like the *Moonlight Sonata*, but I have done that as a kind of earnest of the second stage in getting to know Beethoven. In this second stage the man in the street is expected to apply himself to the enjoyment of the string quartets, together with the symphonies that seem to belong more to the same mood of many of the quartets. The only one recommended for the first stage has been the *Fourth in C minor*, so let us begin the second stage with the *First Quartet in F*. There have been several versions of this, but the latest version published by Columbia and played by the Lener combination is undoubtedly the best. And then try the so-called *Spring Sonata* for violin and piano. Columbia has the best version played by Sammons and Murdoch. Perhaps it would be more suitable to begin the second stage with this. Follow this with the *Second Quartet in G major*. It is hard to know which version of this to recommend, but I feel inclined to say "stick to the Lener combination," though the Flonzaley version of H.M.V. will probably appeal most to connoisseurs. After these two quartets I advise the *First Symphony*, a version of which is conducted by Sir George Henschel and published by Columbia. Follow this with the *Third Quartet in D* and the *Sixth Quartet in B flat*. There are two versions of the last, and here I am going to recommend that published by H.M.V. and played by the Virtuoso Quartet rather than that published by Columbia and played by the Lener Quartet, chiefly because the remarkable 'cello recording is particularly admirable from a technical point of view. Unfortunately, the *Fifth Quartet* has not yet been recorded in full, but the exquisite Air and Variations which constitute its third movement has been published by Columbia on a popular-price 12 in. disc played by the Catterall Quartet, and should not be overlooked. Now I think is the moment for the *Second Symphony*, a

really remarkable performance of which, under the bâton of Sir Thomas Beecham, has been published by Columbia, and it is hard to imagine anything better done. This symphony is extremely melodious, and it is strange that it should not be performed more frequently. We are without an electric recording of the *Tenth Quartet in E flat*, which is the one I propose next. The best performance of this was done by the Spencer Dyke Quartet for the N.G.S. That version, however, is out of print, and one must fall back on the Lener version done for Columbia, though it is, I think, the least successful of all the Lener performances. The second movement in this contains one of the most simple and moving slow melodies that Beethoven ever wrote, and one that I always feel to be in the same mood as the slow movement in the *Fourth Symphony*. This *Fourth Symphony*, so much less often heard than it ought to be, has the calm and radiant beauty of a fine summer evening, and I am not sure that I should not call it my favourite. It is the only one which I believe has never disappointed my mood and has always seemed even more beautiful than I had thought it. The recording of it by Columbia with Sir Hamilton Harty as conductor is a triumph of good taste. The only work of Beethoven with which I ever want to follow it immediately is the *Fourth Piano Concerto in G major*, which seems to me to belong to a similar mood. I see on looking up the dates of composition that they were actually composed in the same year—1806, of which I was unaware when I wrote the preceding sentence. The *Tenth Quartet* was composed three years later, but I cannot help thinking that the slow movement in it was a return to that earlier mood. We have two versions of the *Fourth Concerto*, one with old recording by Vocalion played by York Bowen, and the other with electric recording from Parlophone. From every point of view I prefer the Parlophone version, which is full of the intimate romance this lovely work should possess. Now for the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Quartets known as the Rasoumovsky. I think I shall recommend for a beginning the *Second in E minor* to be followed by the *First in F*, and lastly by the *Third in C major*. I recommend the Lener versions of all three published by Columbia. Actually the best performance of the Second Rasoumovsky was that done by the Virtuoso Quartet with old recording. At any rate, it was better than the Lener Quartet with old recording. The First Rasoumovsky was done by the N.G.S. less successfully, and the Third has been done electrically by the Virtuoso Quartet for H.M.V., but, as I say, though the whole question is arguable, I feel justified in recommending the three new Columbia versions played by the Lener. After these three quartets I recommend a peep at the third stage of the Beethoven progress in the short austere *Eleventh Quartet in F minor*, and in case the man in the street has felt discouraged by this I have left the *Sixth Symphony* as a treat to wind up the second stage,

though I suppose that everybody would call it much easier than the four preceding records advised.

The final stage of the Beethoven progress will be devoted to the five last quartets, beginning with the *Thirteenth in B flat*, of which we have a splendid performance by the Lener on Columbia discs. Then I advise tackling the *Fourteenth Quartet in C sharp minor*, again choosing the Lener-Columbia version, though it is not a new recording. After this I should follow with the *Fifteenth Quartet in A minor*, and choose the Polydor version electrically recorded by the Deman Quartet, because the Lener version with old style recording seems to me a little tame. Then I should go back to the *Twelfth Quartet in E flat* and choose the Lener-Columbia version in preference to the Virtuoso-H.M.V., because I think the Lener people make it more intelligible to the ordinary man. The Virtuoso combination doesn't seem to know what it is all about. Now for the *Sixteenth* and last *Quartet in F major*. I have no hesitation in recommending the Flonzaley-H.M.V. version as much the best for the ordinary man like myself. Before anybody tackles these late quartets I advise him to read Mr. W. J. Turner's study on Beethoven, recently published by Ernest Benn. I am not going to make any attempt to comment on these late quartets myself, because I am a long way from reaching any final opinion about them, and I can safely assume that the man in the street for whom this article is written will not reach these late quartets for a long time yet. Perhaps next year I may have something useful to say about them. At the moment I find myself in agreement with an article on Beethoven by J. W. N. Sullivan in the first number of *The Enemy*, a publication which I may take this opportunity of strongly recommending to all our readers who are as sick as I am of being bumped and bruised by the herd panics of the moment.

It may be observed that I have not mentioned any of Beethoven's Overtures. The reason for this was that none of them seemed to fit in with my route, but I suppose that all of these would belong to the first stage.

On some happy day when we have them all for the gramophone I hope that I shall provide a progress for the man in the street through the thirty-two sonatas.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.

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# RESULT of MARCH COMPETITIONS

## A.—TWENTY BEST TUNES

THIS was an uncommonly hard competition to tackle. How was it to be set? How could it be answered? We begged every one of our readers to take a hand in it: "the results will not be of real value unless the winning list represents the considered judgment of a great many people." In the event about 2 per cent. of our readers competed, and yet the stack of papers was enough to daunt the stoutest heart, and long before June 1st was reached we prayed daily that no more lists might arrive. Secondly, we begged competitors to be absolutely honest in their choice and not to speculate on the tunes which others were likely to choose. Yet this was evidently a counsel of perfection which only a few tried to attain. The lure of the popular favourite was too strong, and the four tunes mentioned at random in the announcement of the competition cropped up in a suspicious number of lists.

However, if we aimed very high and did not succeed in getting exactly what we wanted, it would be foolish to be disappointed by the results. The obvious care taken in the making of the lists is impressive, and the fact that over 750 tunes were chosen proves that there was a strong minority of competitors with definitely individual tastes; but in justice to that minority who, by a close attention to the real object of the competition, deliberately sacrificed the chance of winning, we ought perhaps to claim the result as a list of the Twenty Most Popular Tunes rather than the Twenty Best Tunes.

Here is the winning List, in order of preference:—

1. *The Londonderry Air.*
2. *Handel's Largo (Ombra mai fu).*
3. *Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana (Mas- cagni).*
4. Schubert's *Serenade.*
5. *Liebestraum, Notturno No. 3 (Liszt).*
6. Schubert's *Ave Maria.*
7. *Air on the G String (Bach).*
8. Dvorák's *Humoresque.*
9. *Prize Song (Preislied) from Wagner's Meister- singer.*
10. *The Swan (Le Cygne) (Saint-Saëns).*
11. *Nocturne in E flat, Op. 9, No. 2 (Chopin).*
12. *Softly awakes my heart (Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix) from Samson et Dalila (Saint-Saëns).*
13. *On Wings of Song (Auf flügeln des Gesanges) (Mendelssohn).*

14. *Drink to me only with thine eyes.*
15. *Unfinished Symphony (Schubert).*
16. *Andante Cantabile from Quartet in D, Op. 11 (Tchaikovsky).*
17. *La Marseillaise (Rouget de l'Isle).*
18. *Barcarolle from Contes d'Hoffmann (Offenbach).*
19. *Voi che sapete from Marriage of Figaro (Mozart).*
20. *Pilgrims' Chorus from Tannhäuser (Wagner).*

Closely following these come fourteen more tunes:—

21. *Che farò senza Euridice from Orfeo ed Euridice (Gluck).*
22. *Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde (Wagner).*
23. *Largo from Dvorák's Fifth Symphony ("From the New World").*
24. *O Star of Eve from Tannhäuser (Wagner).*
25. *Ave Maria (Bach-Gounod).*
26. Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto in E minor.*
27. *Song of the Volga Boatmen.*
28. *Meditation from Thaïs (Massenet).*
29. *Melody in F (Rubinstein).*
30. *Träumerei (Schumann).*
31. *Shenandoah.*
32. *Spring Song (Mendelssohn).*
33. *Who is Sylvia? (Schubert).*
34. *Rhinemaiden's Song from Rheingold (Wagner).*

Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* and Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* are perhaps higher than they would be if the votes for the different tunes in them had not been put together. Otherwise the order of preference may be taken as exact.

The First Prize of Five Pounds is won by

W. D. HUGHES,  
Post Office House,  
Dunmow,  
Essex,

who gives fourteen out of the first twenty tunes and three out of the next fourteen.

The Second Prize of Three Pounds is divided between E. C. BLAKE, Central House, Honiton, Devon, and E. D. GOFTON, 12, Rowan Avenue, New Earswick, York, who give thirteen out of the first twenty tunes.

Four Consolation Prizes, copies of H. L. Wilson's *Music and the Gramophone*, are awarded to Mrs. G. M. Bairstow, E. F. Gardiner, E. L. Nash and Mrs. D. M. Youens, all of whom give twelve out of the first twenty tunes.

The voting lists will be considered at greater leisure by the Editor, who hopes to deal with them in the August number.

## B.—FOR OVERSEAS READERS ONLY

The prizes offered in March for the best description in not more than 300 words of Good Overseas Service were merely a bait for drawing the confidence of our overseas readers and for finding out how they chose and obtained their gramophone records, with the idea of improving *our* service towards them. It is no disparagement to the close and much appreciated readers in the British Isles who keep in constant or intermittent touch with the London office if we confess that our eye is more often strained to the horizon than focussed on the foreground. It is more important, or so it seems, not to let down the exile than to satisfy the nearer neighbour who can take his gramophonic troubles, ignorances and indignations to his friend in the next house or his dealer in the main street. It is more important to give information, often in longish and even serious articles, to the man overseas who has time and enthusiasm to read THE GRAMOPHONE from cover to cover than to cater for the man who has difficulty in finding ten minutes a month to spare for a glance through these pages. (Anyone who has read as far as this may assume that he is classed for the moment with the overseas readers.)

What then emerges from the reports received? Putting aside the compliments about the usefulness and integrity of THE GRAMOPHONE, upon which modesty forbids us to dilate, we find that overseas readers have at any rate one advantage over the rest of us, which only a few of them appreciate. They read reviews of new records in THE GRAMOPHONE, they even read the Editor's quarterly reviews, long before they have a chance of getting the records; it may be three to six months after a record is released in England that it reaches the more distant gramophone stores. Your antipodean reader may gnash his teeth when he sees that some great work has at last been recorded and reflects that he cannot get it for ever so long; but when he finds in the next GRAMOPHONE

that the same work has been better recorded by a rival firm, and in the following month that a third and best version has been issued by another firm, surely he is relieved of a great deal of the chagrin and suspense which cause sleepless nights to the English reader.

That is one point. Another is that the overseas reader pays a big price for each record, and therefore cannot afford to buy "duds." He probably earns much more money than we do over here, so we need not be too sympathetic about the price of records. Moreover, he saves money over his gramophone as a general rule. He is not consumed with the itch to buy a new one every six months or to indulge in every new gadget that comes out. He carries on with the old contraption—and often thinks that it is the finest gramophone in God's own country—until he comes to England on leave, when one of his first duties is to pay a visit to Frith Street and to get some advice about buying a new gramophone to take out with him when he goes back.

As regards service, he is evidently served far better than might be supposed. Whether he buys records locally or from England he is well served. Nearly every entrant for this Competition speaks of good packing, courtesy and despatch, willingness to replace damaged records and even to change unsatisfactory ones. There are a few grumbles, but they are nothing compared with the reports of efficiency; and it must not be forgotten that the exile may be occasionally unreasonable in his expectations.

Some of the competitors do not give the name of the firm which supplies them, although they testify to its high qualities; and this is a pity, since we should like to publish a complete list for the benefit of other overseas readers. Messrs. Imhof, of 110, New Oxford Street, London, W.C. 1, are commended by a considerable majority; but other firms which receive honourable mention are Messrs. Rushworth and Dreaper (Liverpool), The Gramophone Exchange (London), Messrs. Keith Prowse (London), Messrs. Mackay Bros. (Johannesburg), Messrs. L. Bethlehem (Johannesburg), Messrs. Polliack (Cape Town), Messrs. Laurence and Cope (Bulawayo), The Vocalion Gramophone Co. (Melbourne), Messrs. Howie (Auckland, N.Z.), Messrs. W. H. Everett and Sons, Ltd. (London), Mr. Antonio D'Amato (Malta), The Orchorsol Gramophone Co. (London), and Messrs. Robert Morley and Co. (Lewisham, etc.). We shall be glad to supplement this list with other names if readers who can guarantee good service from personal experience will send them in.

The first prize, THREE POUNDS' WORTH OF RECORDS (winner's choice), is awarded to the Rev. W. A. B. Clementson, Keremeos, British Columbia, and consolation prizes, copies of *Music and the Gramophone*, by H. L. Wilson, have been sent to Mr. N. Hackney, 4, Racecourse Road, Lahore, India; the Rev. F. V.

Dawkins, St. Paul's School, Jalapahar, Darjeeling, India; Mr. Harold G. Kinsman, 3, St. James, Isabella Grove, Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia; and "Extorris," North Borneo. Some writers of excellent reports had a generous conception of the limits of 300 words; but to them and to all other unsuccessful competitors we offer our best thanks for much interesting information.

Besides the winning contribution we give some extracts from others.

#### GOOD OVERSEAS RECORD SERVICE.

The criticisms of records in *THE GRAMOPHONE* are invaluable, and I have never been disappointed when I have followed the advice of the Editor and other critics.

Many good records can be bought in Canada, especially those made from the English moulds imported by the Columbia Company and, to a smaller extent, by the Victor Company; but I order most of my records from the old country. I think the English recordings are the best. For a long time I have ordered exclusively from Alfred Imhof, 110, New Oxford Street, London, and this firm has always given me complete satisfaction. Only twice, so far as I can remember, have they been out of stock of any record I ordered, and those were of German manufacture (Polydor), and they soon procured them for me. I have found them most obliging, businesslike and prompt. The records are always sent off without delay. The time they take to get across depends on circumstances outside their control. I have once received records within one month of sending my order, but it usually takes a little longer. The chief delay is on this side of the water, chiefly through the Customs.

I find it pays to wait till one can afford to order nine 12-inch records at once, as this number can be mailed at a cost of 6s. 5d., including a small fee for insurance against breakage. This is worth while, as Messrs. Imhof always replace any broken record without delay. If the records are sometimes broken it is due rather to the rough usage the mail receives on our western railways, for the Imhof method of packing appears to me as good as it can possibly be. Quite recently a parcel of records reached me in a battered condition. The box itself was completely broken, and I opened it with a sinking heart; but to my surprise I found that, thanks to the careful packing, not a record was even cracked.

Rev. W. A. B. CLEMENTSON, British Columbia.

I suppose the record service in India is as good as possible considering the vastness of the country and the smallness of the scattered European communities.

As far as India is concerned, only two recording companies exist—H.M.V., with a "pressing station" at Calcutta and an amazingly widespread distributing organisation, and Columbia, with just one agency, also at Calcutta. Until a month ago choosing records was, in my case, entirely a gamble . . .

Now, however, I flatter myself that I have solved the problem of choice. I chanced upon a copy of *THE GRAMOPHONE* on a dealer's counter, and that same night a year's subscriptions started for Home. A sheaf of back numbers arrived last mail, and, as the result of a week's intensive study of Editorials and Analytical Notes, two orders for records have gone to Calcutta. I feel that I am now master of the situation: we get our records three months after their issue in England, whereas *THE GRAMOPHONE* is but eighteen days en route; the prudent gramophile is thus able to pick out the plums at his leisure and send an advance order to the agents, who are perfectly willing to reserve records for known customers.

N. HACKNEY, Punjab, India.

1. *Accuracy.* In ordering records the names and reference numbers should be carefully stated. The firm supplying records should remember that any mistake made may lead to great inconvenience and delay. For instance, a record was omitted once, and this meant correspondence and a delay of three months, which might have been avoided had a responsible person been in charge of the department.

2. *Postal regulations.* The Post Office now accepts parcels up to 20 lbs. weight. Parcel post takes about 13 days longer than book post, and therefore books and music should be sent by book post. Books and music are admitted to India free of Customs duty.

3. *Customs regulations.* The declaration should be very carefully filled up, showing the exact value of the contents of each parcel on its own declaration form. The exact records packed in each should be stated on the invoice, which should tally with the parcels in case of a query from the Customs as to the contents. Neglect of this led in my case to a month's delay in delivery, and 12s. 6d. extra duty. Customs duty is 30 per cent. on value, but a reasonable amount of records and a gramophone are admitted free of duty when the owner carries them as personal luggage.

4. *Weight.* This should always be stated, as it is the only way of ascertaining whether the records are all there. Postal regulations do not permit parcels to be opened until the receipt has been signed.

5. *Cost.* The total cost of getting records in this way is about the same as of buying records manufactured in Calcutta.

Rev. F. V. DAWKINS, Darjeeling, India.

Ordering records has become a pleasure since a blessed chance put the writer in touch with a copy of *THE GRAMOPHONE* . . . The greatest pleasure in life in a lonely place is to look forward to, and try over, the parcel of new records received each month.

It is somewhat amusing when on holiday in England to have a friend—who does not read *THE GRAMOPHONE*—offer to give one a real treat by playing a splendid new record he has bought, and then hear an old favourite heard six months ago in Borneo, a month or so after it was published.

"EXTORRIS," North Borneo.

The service at both the large dealer and the sub-agent can bear no criticism. I personally obtain my records from L. Bethlehem Co., Bree Street, Johannesburg, who are authorised sub-agents. This firm, like almost any other musical store, has a large amount of audition rooms, where almost any record catalogues may be tried over, without the slightest obligation to purchase. This firm even goes so far as to send records out on the approval system. Records are always in the best condition, thus our home friends may see that our service easily competes with the best of that offered in their country.

P. DE JONGH, Johannesburg, S.A.

The average audition chambers in South African saloons are small, anything but sound-proof, and in summer-time become almost unbearably hot, and with "opposition" cubicles in full blast all sense of hearing any record to advantage is lost; hence many a customer whose time is often limited leaves with records which, when heard on his own machine, are often disappointing, but there is no redress, as in South Africa there is no such thing as exchanging a record or obtaining a record on approval from place of purchase. . . . The price of records in South Africa is 50 per cent. in advance of the purchase price in England, and when one has to pay a minimum of 4s. 6d. for one disc surely it should be at his own choosing under normal conditions.

"SEA BREEZE," Natal, S.A.

Nothing can exceed the trouble, courtesy and consideration of this firm (Messrs. Robert Morley and Co.). They are always prompt in despatch, most careful in packing and meticulous in executing orders. A wrong number will be corrected by reference to the title given (always a safeguard when ordering from abroad). On one memorable occasion they even consented to exchange a set ordered in error, notwithstanding the double journey had proved fatal to the original set from a business point of view. This sacrifice, however, was not accepted. Accidents have been conspicuously rare, in spite of the risks attending upon the passing of parcels through the Customs at this end.

C. M. KLINDWORTH, Portuguese East Africa.

While the local Gramophone Society is anxious to get records of other makes, such as Columbia, it cannot do so owing to the entire lack of satisfactory service. They spend several pounds monthly on records for their library . . . Apart from H.M.V., it may be said that there is no other service. There are many gramophones in use: every farmer has one, there are several on each large mine, while in town the gramophone takes the place of the piano to a very large extent. It would pay, therefore, if other makers put their Rhodesian service upon a more satisfactory basis.

TRENANCE, Rhodesia.

For H.M.V.'s and Columbia's I make a list from the records reviewed in THE GRAMOPHONE, and then wait patiently for the supplements to arrive. But with Parlophone records I have found a better way. I select my records by your reviews and hand the list to a man who sells cheap books, scent, chalks, chewing gum and gramophone records—the sort of shop a lot of people despise: and in about three weeks I have the records, that is about eight weeks after they are reviewed by THE GRAMOPHONE.

J. WHITE, South Brisbane, Australia.

Later on I got into touch with the Vocalion Gramophone Company in Melbourne, and they now keep me supplied with catalogues and bulletins issued by the principal recording firms. Every month a box of records selected by myself is sent on approval. They pay the freight, the records always arrive in good condition. In this way I hear all the best records issued by the Columbia, H.M.V., Polydor, Parlophone and Vocalion Companies.

ARTHUR LANGHORNE, Tasmania, Australia.

On my way to England I visited the larger Australian cities, and by careful observation I am sure that in Auckland we gramophonists are better catered for. Seeing that we pay 20 per cent. higher price on records I think we deserve better service.

J. A. DAVIES, Auckland, N.Z.

So far as New Zealand is concerned almost every record of Vocalion, Columbia and H.M.V. (except No. 2 Catalogue, which require to be obtained from England) are kept in stock by the big dealers, or, at all events, quickly procured from the wholesalers . . . Parlophone and Brunswick records are usually procurable, if recently issued, but are hard to obtain otherwise. (Brunswick *Celebrities* very difficult to purchase) . . .

Cheap records, such as Homochord, Imperial, Scala and Grafton, are usually sold by booksellers as a side line . . .

Columbia people here are very alert and do very big sales. Vocalion are sold practically by only one firm in Wellington, and that firm also sells H.M.V. and Columbia, so that very

few Vocalions are sold here—more's the pity. Brunswick could do with a lot of livening up, for the good "celebrities" are quickly sold out and only the "duds" kept in stock. As you are aware, they have some splendid artists on their list, and it is a pity their records are not available. It is not unusual to have to wait twelve months or more for a Brunswick record ordered through a local dealer.

C. F. WILLIAMS, Wellington, New Zealand.

The records which I have ordered up to now were received in excellent condition. In case they arrive damaged or are faulty, I have the right to refuse them. The said dealer, and, in fact, all other local dealers, charge an extra 6d. on the catalogue price of each record whether this is bought or ordered. This is due to a local 15 per cent. ad valorem duty on records.

Dr. ALFRED BUGEJA, Malta.

The service is very prompt, the records being sent the same day as the order is received; they take from seven to ten days from date of posting, the time varying according to the amount of time spent on them in the Customs (the duty is very trifling, about 2d. on each record). Always they arrive in good condition.

I choose my records from the criticisms in THE GRAMOPHONE and also the *Daily Telegraph*, and I rarely get a "dud." The excitement and interest caused through a box of unknown records makes up for an occasional difference of opinion re the merits of a record.

Miss NORA MITCHELL, Geneva, Switzerland.



## INDEX TO VOL. IV.

### A NOTE BY THE COMPILER.

The delay in getting the Index into final shape for printing needs an apology, but since I am told that only very few readers of THE GRAMOPHONE have shown any anxiety to possess it, my conscience is not uneasy. The few are just those who will understand why it is worth while not to hurry the work for the sake of keeping to the time-table. The proofs have been read by the Editor, Mr. P. Wilson, Mr. W. A. Chislett and Mr. H. F. V. Little, and if any serious errors or omissions have escaped them it will be because there was so much in the first instance to be corrected. I am grateful to them; even with the text books and dictionaries that I used there were many things which I could not trace, and but for Mr. Little I should probably have gone to my grave without knowing that "The Broken Ring" was not composed by the best-known Gluck.

The use of thick type to indicate the more important references will save trouble, since it was not thought advisable to omit altogether any references, however trivial; and the use of italic figures for references to reviews, both for compositions and for artists, will show at a glance who or what has been recorded in the last twelve months.

# Analytical Notes and First Reviews



## ORCHESTRAL

[Note.—“K.K.” is away on holiday and will resume his reviews next month.—ED.]

### COLUMBIA.

L.1978, 1979 (12in., 13s.). New Queen’s Hall Orchestra conducted by Sir Henry Wood; *Leonore No. 3* (Beethoven).

This, the third of the *Leonore* Overtures, was written for the performance of *Fidelio* given during 1806. It is always amusing to recall how contemporary opinion professed to discover a remarkable advancement in Beethoven’s writing between the first and the third overtures. The first was written several months after the third. The public is never tired of a good tale against the critics. There was a similar mistake in the criticisms of Bernard Shaw’s early novels.

As with the other overtures associated with *Fidelio*, and with the *Coriolan* and *Egmont* overtures, the music can be taken at its face value, without any reference to the dramatic significance. Indeed, it is sometimes profitable for the listener to evolve his own story in each case, for it is impossible to listen to any of these works without being aware of an intense atmosphere and a heart sorely charged.

The performance is marked by Sir Henry Wood’s sound notions as to *tempo* and contrast. There are some remarkable features throughout the recording, notably the smooth texture of the ensemble at the very beginning, the echo phrases on the first side, and the clarity of the runs on the third side. On the other hand, the recording process has not been sufficiently nimble to capture the rapid-speaking of the flute in Part 4, and at the very end I was surprised to discover that the drums were sounding a full semitone sharp. I cannot believe that this was due to faulty tuning. It is more reasonable to suppose that it was due to some acoustical trick in the Scala Theatre.

It is interesting to note in this recording that the second trumpet-call is brought nearer than the first. At the recent Covent Garden performances no difference was made between the calls.

### HIS MASTER’S VOICE.

D.1246 (12in., 6s. 6d.) State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Leo Blech: *Mignon Overture* (Ambroise Thomas).

Save for an occasional exuberance in the string-tone, this is a first-rate performance both on the part of the players and of the recording company. Leo Blech has chosen his *tempi* with a careful ear for contrast and culminating effect, and each family in the orchestra has responded with admirable unanimity. The beginning of the Overture is a severe test in the faithful reproduction of colour. The mechanical process must be nimble enough to capture in succession wood-wind, brass and strings alternating, harp, clarinet and finally a horn solo—(“Connais-tu ?”) The test is passed in this case with great distinction. The realism of the initial horn-call at the beginning of the reverse side is nothing less than startling.

### PARLOPHONE.

E.10576 and 10577 (12in., 13s.). State Opera House Orchestra, Berlin, conducted by Edward Moerike; *Rienzi, Overture and Grand March, Tannhäuser* (Wagner).

E.10578 (12in., 4s. 6d.). State Opera House Orchestra, Berlin, conducted by Dr. Weissmann; *Overture to Martha* (Flotow).

Although we never have the opportunity of seeing a production of *Rienzi* in this country, the Overture—a self-contained composition—is as familiar as the *Tannhäuser Overture*. When the Opera was first heard in 1842, Wagner was in great anxiety about the success. The performance of the Overture and the acclamation that followed did much to relieve his mind, although later in the evening there was further cause to be anxious through the great length of the work.

These records of the Overture are remarkably faithful to the various orchestral colours. Note the bass-string tone at the beginning, for instance, and later, on the same side, the violin *arabesques*; then, again, the brass on the second side. This is the kind of clear, clean brass-tone that we rarely hear outside the Annual Brass Band Competition at the Crystal Palace.

The *Martha* Overture records that are sent to me are slightly impeded by surface noises. Perhaps these have been corrected in the general issue. In any case they are not serious enough to mar the beautiful horn playing on the first side and the well-constructed climax (with a very realistic drum-roll) at the end. It is well that the music should be adequately recorded, since it is Flotow’s only serious claim to perpetuation.

### BRUNSWICK.

80001 (12in., 6s. 6d.). State Opera House Orchestra, Berlin, conducted by Max von Schillings. *The Valkyries—Magic Fire Spell* (Wagner).

The most attractive quality of this performance is the immense power in each successive climax. The power is implied rather than expended. There is no kind of blātancy or exuberance here. Play it over and take note of (1) the broad dignity of the “Superman Siegfried” theme at the beginning, (2) the rounded tone in the descent of the “Bargaining” motive on the reverse side, and (3) the marvellously clear detail and at the same time the subtly compounded *ensemble* at the very end. This is a record to treasure.

### VOCALION.

K.05302 (12in., 4s. 6d.). Festival Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Stanley Chapple; *Lohengrin, Introduction to Act 3*; and, conducted by Adrian C. Boult, *The Mastersingers, The Procession, Act III* (Wagner).

The blatancy, which was so well avoided in the record I have just reviewed, makes an unwelcome appearance in the Introduction to the third Act of *Lohengrin*, here recorded. The music itself is the first cause, doubtless. It is inseparably associated in our minds with exceeding heartiness, but there is the whole difference between giving way to its impulse and controlling it. Mr. Chapple has taken the path of least resistance and fullest proclamation.

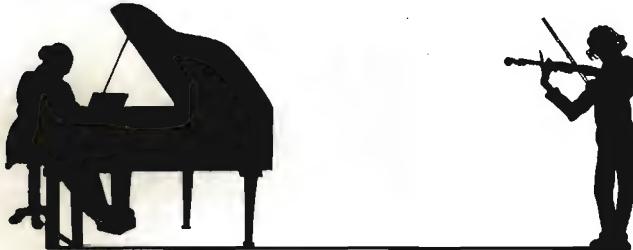
Mr. Adrian Boult, on the other hand, and on the other side, gives us an admirable performance of the Procession music from *The Mastersingers*—firm without being inflexible, sonorous without being strident.

## EDISON BELL.

V.F.1206, 1207 (10in., 5s.). Royal Symphony Orchestra :  
The Gipsy Suite (Edward German).

This is music to delight in without shame. It asks for no condescension and no apology. Each movement is constructed and scored with the hand of a master, and each is a fund of melodic invention. These records are a fair achievement. The first side is rather lifeless and in the second movement (*The Dance*) the upper strings fail to carry. *The Revel* (on the last side) gets out of hand about half-way through, through the various conflicting ideas of *tempo* among the players—a touch of realism which can on no account be made legitimate.

BASIL MAINE.



## INSTRUMENTAL

## PIANO.

Remembering that Paderewski plays on an Erard I used for his record (H.M.V. D.B.1037, 12in., 8s. 6d.) a medium needle instead of the loud steel I usually employ for H.M.V. piano discs. The result was satisfactory; the limitations of the instrument could still be felt here and there in the Chopin *Etude in E, op. 10, No. 3*, but they are not of the kind that a different needle might have remedied. Paderewski's playing of the well-known Schubert *Impromptu in A flat*, with its slow *tempo*, strong emphasis on the principal melody, and frequent "spread" chords, is of the kind that appeals to our Victorian grandmothers and which we are inclined to deprecate as sentimental. If he convinces us, in spite of our Georgian predilections, it is because he never for a moment loses sight of the rhythmic outline of the music, preserves a just balance throughout, and is careful to avoid distorting the shape of the melody. The same characteristics are noticeable in the Chopin, where we also get some beautifully clear technique and a splendid lesson in the proper use of *rubato*. The recording is first-rate.

When, some time ago, Harold Samuel recorded the first half of Bach's *Partita in B flat*, I remember expressing the hope that the second half would follow. Here it is—the *Sarabande*, *Menuets I and II*, and the *Gigue*, quite complete (with most of the repeats) on H.M.V. D.1245 (12in., 6s. 6d.). I imagine Mr. Samuel recorded the whole *Partita* at the same time; anyhow the recording, good though it be, is not quite so remarkable as some of the most recent piano issues. De Greef's Chopin *Sonata* I could play with a loud needle; here I have to use a medium. But it doesn't in the least matter. Who wants a loud needle for Bach, anyhow? And I would far rather listen with my medium needle to Mr. Samuel's enchanting performance of these ever-fresh numbers than to any amount of loud needle thunderings (however well recorded) by an inferior artist.

These are the only piano records I have received up to date. Happily they are both winners!

## ORGAN.

The excellent recording does justice to some charming and delicate effects in *Vesper Song*, and still more in *Fountain Melody*, composed and played by Arthur Meale on H.M.V.B.2450 (10in., 3s.). Neither piece is of great significance musically, but they contain nothing offensive and the neat and efficient performance deserves to be recognised. Professor Walter

Fischer, of whose records for Polydor I have pleasant recollections, has now played Handel's *Largo* and Schumann's *Träumerei* for the Brunswick Company (60,000, 12in., 4s. 6d.). Here he rather disappoints me; it seems a pity to chop up the melody of the *Largo* into small sections for the sake of certain effects of registration. A touch of clumsiness here and there I attribute to the instrument (can it be Fischer's own organ in the Berlin Cathedral?), but the recording too is by no means perfect—nothing like so good as we expect nowadays in organ records. However, if this disc leaves something to be desired, Fischer and the Brunswick Company fully atone for it in a superb performance of Rheinberger's *Organ Concerto, op. 177*, on three 12in. records (80005-7, 19s. 6d.). The same work was played by the same organist on some Polydor records that I reviewed in the April number, and I suspect that the same matrices were used. If so, the Brunswick pressing is an improvement upon the Polydor. Surely here the orchestra is more distinct and effective, the general result more mellow? Rheinberger may not be a composer of quite the first rank, but his suave, diatonic melodies and sound craftsmanship make him very refreshing to listen to. This is another case where I recommend a medium needle for any but a very large room.

G. T. Pattman (Columbia 9206, 12in., 4s. 6d.) has succumbed to the prevailing fashion and given us a *Storm* of his own composition, a very wet and windy storm, though the thunder, if frequent, is mercifully fairly distant. On the other side is Easthope Martin's *Evensong*, genteel, sentimental stuff, of which one can say little, except that it is nicely played. Franck's *Piece Héroïque* (9207, 12in., 4s. 6d.) is a composition more worthy of the fine Columbia recording, and as far as the reproduction is concerned I consider this version outdoes the one recently issued by H.M.V., especially in the sonority of the pedal part. But Dupré was the H.M.V. artist, and Pattman, though he does very well indeed, lacks the perfect clarity and sense of balance of his French *confrère*.

It will be noticed that the two most important items on this month's organ list are duplications of works already issued. The limitations of the organist's *repertoire* are thus already becoming apparent. There still remain, of course, the Franck *Chorales* and a number of Sonatas by Mendelssohn and Rheinberger, but unless we are to drift into a Sargasso Sea of sentimental snippets, the day is fast approaching when players and recording companies alike will be forced back to Bach. *Der Tag!* May it come quickly!

## VIOLIN.

In *Wait* (Guy d'Hardelot) Albert Sandler continues to display his beautiful tone on music that hardly deserves it (Vocalion X10006, 10in., 3s.); *Songs my Mother taught me* (on the other side) is a better tune, but the failure of the pianist to observe the subtle cross-rhythms that Dvorák has introduced into the piano part is rather unfortunate. Sandler chooses to end in the minor key; I agree with the composer in preferring the major. It is a matter of taste, I suppose. Svendsen's *Romance in G* (Columbia, D1577, 10in., 4s. 6d.), though not very profound, is at least genuine violin music, pleasantly written, and as played by Albert Sammons it makes very agreeable hearing.

## 'CELLO.

Davidoff's *At the Fountain*, which Orabio de Castro plays on Parlophone 10581 (12in., 4s. 6d.) turns out to be a good example of virtuoso music for the 'cello. It is rare to hear the instrument sound so well when played very fast, and for this achievement due credit must go to the effective and musicianly writing of the composer, the excellent performance of the 'cellist, and the clearness of the recording. Chopin's E flat *Nocturne* on the back is also well done and only a little sentimentalised. Naturally the exclusively pianistic ornamentation has had to be modified, but I do not mind this, though there are places where I should have preferred a less pronounced *portamento*. The pianist's part is dull, and one can hardly blame him for sounding a little bored. Jacques van Lier

plays *Le Cygne* (Saint-Saëns) with good tone and true feeling for line and balance (Vocalion K.05306, 12in., 4s. 6d.), and I would rather listen to him in this than in the showy but empty *Gavotte* by Popper on the other side. Both pieces are well recorded.

#### VIOLA DA GAMBA AND HARPSICHORD.

A record of a *Sonata in C* by Handel (Parlophone 10582-3, two 12in. records, 9s.) for viola da gamba and harpsichord is perhaps the most interesting item on this month's instrumental list. The players are Paul Grümmer and Anna Linde, and each has done full justice to his or her instrument. The viola da gamba was a predecessor of the cello, possessing a similar compass and fitted with a system of sympathetic strings (see "Grove"). As played here it sounds extraordinarily attractive and blends very well with the harpsichord. The *Sonata*, though not one of Handel's masterpieces, is still full of interest. Two movements will be found on the first side and one on each of the two succeeding sides. The fourth side contains a *Divertimento* by Haydn, a good tune with variations. It sounds well, though the music strikes me as less ideally suited to the instrument than that of Handel. Congratulations to Parlophone on their enterprise and on the success with which they have carried it out.

P. L.

P.S.—There is no chamber music for review this month.

### THE GRIEG PIANO CONCERTO

#### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.1237-40 (four 12in. records in album, 26s.)—**Arthur de Greef** and the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra (conducted by Sir Landon Ronald): *Piano Concerto in A minor* (Grieg).

The only previous version of this Concerto with which I am acquainted is an old one on two records made by de Greef for H.M.V. This is of course superseded by the present series of four records, which gives the work in its entirety with all the advantages of electric recording.

In the foreword which the company prints with an analysis at the beginning of the album de Greef is described as "a close personal friend of the composer," and under these circumstances one hesitates to criticise his rendering or to censure one or two very trifling divergences from the printed score. Taken as a whole, his performance is certainly full of interest and even eloquence, and if one does not always agree with him in detail the broad lines of his interpretation carry conviction.

The music is well recorded with that full sonority that characterises modern H.M.V. orchestral records. If there is a fault it lies, I think, in a certain lack of delicacy. Those tripping passages for the piano early in the first movement hardly sound *molto leggiero* (the composer's direction), and the massive, slightly brassy tone with which the strings open the *Adagio* is not my idea of Grieg's intentions at this point. There is a suspicion of cloudiness, too, once or twice, when the orchestra is playing very loud.

But, when all is said and done, we have got a fine, spirited interpretation of a noble work, and if I have found details that seem imperfect I must in fairness set against them such singularly successful work as the beginning of the sixth side, and the place on the seventh side where we arrive at that magical change of mood (the passage marked *poco più tranquillo*). No *Concerto* is easy to record, and this very exuberant example of the species must be full of "snags" for the experts. They have not achieved perfection, but they have come sufficiently near it to deserve both our thanks and our congratulations. Any lover of the work who refrains from purchasing it because he feels it may fall short of his ideal is likely to have to wait a long time before he gets anything better.

My No. 4 sound-box makes no difficulty about a loud needle, but in my room I get better results with a medium.

P. L.



### CHORAL

#### H.M.V.

**Choir of the Temple Church, London**, with organ, recorded in the Temple Church (Organist, G. Thalben Ball, Soloist, Master E. Lough): *Hear my Prayer* and *Oh, for the wings of a dove* (Mendelssohn). C.1329 (12in., 4s. 6d.)

**York Minster Choir** (unaccompanied) conducted by Dr. E. C. Bairstow: *O Lord, increase my faith, O clap your hands, and God is gone up* (Gibbons). C.1337, (12in., 4s. 6d.) *This day Christ was born* and *Christe, qui lux es et dies* (Byrd). C.1334, (12in., 4s. 6d.)

#### VOCALION.

**John Buckley** (bass) with **Men's Chorus** and piano: *Student Songs*, arr. Gerrard Williams; *All through the night, The Animals went in two by two, Goodnight Ladies and Upidee*. X.10005 (10in., 3s.)

#### COLUMBIA.

**The B.B.C. Choir**, conducted by Stanford Robinson, with organ (W. G. Webber) in Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road: *Jerusalem* (Wm. Blake and C. H. H. Parry) and *Jesus shall reign* (Dr. Watts, Tune—Rimington). 4364 (10in., 3s.)

Much has already been said on other pages of the *Temple Church* record. I will only note the fact that there is a big cut in *O for the wings*—in fact, to where the melody returns as given at the opening; and remark that Mendelssohn's harmony is altered, possibly by accident, in one small place, and that Master Lough's solo work evidently aims at being (to say the least) highly emotional.

In the Gibbons volume of the magnificent monumental edition of Tudor Church Music published by the Oxford University Press for the Carnegie Trust, the writer chooses these very two anthems, *God is gone up* and *O Lord, increase my faith*, with one other, as examples of Gibbons's supreme achievement. He speaks of the "bold assurance" of the first (which, by the way, is really the second part of *O clap your hands*), and of the "reflective tenderness" of the second. To anyone who doesn't feel equal to buying the whole volume, I recommend the spending of a few coppers on these particular anthems. The eight-part *Gloria to God is gone up* is one of the most truly glorious moments I know in music. The performance and recording of these is far from ideal; there are several doubtful moments, balance and clarity are imperfect, there is little subtlety and a good deal of crudity. But if you have the John's, Cambridge, record reviewed last month, or even without it, you could hardly get a false impression of such music from this record; and indeed it is easily well enough done, finely effective enough, for one to feel that the omission of this record from one's library would be one of its most unpardonable gaps.

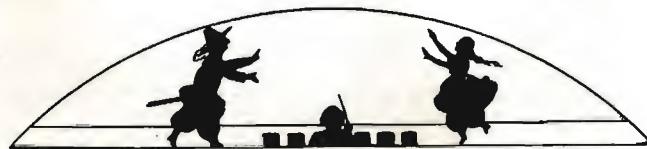
Byrd's *This day Christ was born* (*Hodie Christus natus est*) is published by Stainer and Bell (8d.), *Christe, qui Lux es et Dies*, with Latin and English words, by the Oxford University Press (6d.). If you get this record and the John's, Cambridge, record you will have a complete representation of one of the greatest composers, and of some of the greatest music, of all time. The Christmas Carol is superbly exultant. The Choir doesn't quite bring out all the points, e.g. "This day the Angels sing in earth," "Glory be to God on high," and one "Alleluia;" and I don't like the end to fade away. *Christe,*

*qui Lux es* is an old Compline Hymn. For the first verse the plainsong is sung unison, unaccompanied. For the succeeding verses the tune is put in each of the five parts in turn, starting with the Bass and rising to the Treble. From Byrd's consummate setting there is not a composer alive who could not learn. You may wince at a few of Byrd's typical clashes, but they are sung quite correctly. Personally I had to play the first verse through a few times to get hold of the tune.

From Vocalion comes a first-rate record of high spirits. *Buckley* has, in the few places here where occasion arises, rather a bad tremolo; and words are not always too clear, especially of the Chorus, especially in the song of the animals. But the record is perfectly indispensable, if only for *Upidee*—when you can't get a crowd to sing it with you—or even then, to stimulate your own efforts.

This is one of the best of the many recordings of *Jerusalem*, Above all, there is no tampering with Parry's setting. There is too much tone from the organ, which sounds confused. Here's *Rimington* again—one of the worst hymn-tunes ever written. It has a good performance, though there is again too much tone—this time from the Choir as well as from the organ.

C. M. C.



## OPERATIC

**ANNA MARIA GUGLIELMETTI** (soprano).—*Regnava nel silenzio* and *Quando rapita in estasi* from *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Donizetti). In Italian. Col. L. 1959, 12in., 6s. 6d.

**MARIA JERITZA** (soprano).—*Il est doux, il est bon* from *Herodiade* (Massenet) and *Adieu, forêts* from *Jeanne d'Arc* (Tchaikovsky). In French. Orch. acc. H.M.V. D.B.1041, 12in., 8s. 6d.

**GWYLADYS NAISH** (soprano).—*Shadow Song, Ombra leggiera* from *Dinorah* (Meyerbeer) and *Gli angui d'inferno, Queen of the Night Song*, from *The Magic Flute* (Mozart). In Italian. Orch. acc. Velvet Face 708, 12in., 4s.

**ARTHUR JORDAN** (tenor).—*Flower Song* from *Carmen* (Bizet) and *O vision entrancing* from *Esmeralda* (Goring Thomas). In English. Col. 9204, 12 in., 4s. 6d.

**LUCIEN MURATORE** (tenor).—*Amor ti vieta* from *Fédora* (Giordano) and *Air de la fleur* (*Flower Song*) from *Carmen* (Bizet). In French. Orch. acc. Actuelle 15245, 12in., 6s.

**TINO PATTIERA** (tenor).—*O Lola* and *Turiddu's Farewell* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni). In Italian. Orch. acc. Parlo. E.10584, 12in., 4s. 6d.

**TITO SCHIPA** (tenor).—*Fantaisie aux divins mensonges* from *Lakmè* (Delibes) and *Pourquoi me reveiller?* from *Werther* (Massenet). In French. Orch. acc. H.M.V. D.A.870 10in., 6s.

**CECIL SHERWOOD** (tenor).—*Calma il tuo cor* from *Mefistofele* (Boito) and *A te o cara* from *I Puritani* (Bellini). In Italian. Col. 4365, 10in., 3s.

**ALESSANDRO VALENTE** (tenor).—*Non piangere Liù* and *Nessun dorma* from *Turandot* (Puccini). In Italian. Orch. acc. conducted by Manlio di Veroli. H.M.V. B.2458, 10in., 3s.

**GIUSEPPE DANISE** (baritone).—*Nemico della patria*, Act 3. *Ancrea Chénier* (Giordano) and *Credo* from *Otello* (Verdi), In Italian. Orch. acc. Brunswick 50079, 12in., 8s.

**CARLO GALEFFI** (baritone).—*Largo al factotum* from *Barber of Seville* (Rossini) and *Dio possente* from *Faust* (Gounod). In Italian. Orch. acc. Col. L.1980, 12in., 6s. 6d.

**IVAR ANDRESEN** (bass).—*O Isis and Osiris* and *Within this hallowed dwelling* from *The Magic Flute* (Mozart). In German. Orch. acc. Parlo. E.10574, 12in., 4s. 6d.

**SPANI** (soprano) and **ZENATELLO** (tenor).—*Otello Love Duet*. Finale Act I.—*Quando narravi* and *Venga la morte* (Verdi). In Italian. Orch. acc. H.M.V. D.B.1006, 12 in., 8s. 6d.

**LA SCALA CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA**.—(a) *Gravi, enormi, venerandi*, Act 2, Sc. 2, and (b) *O Divina! nella luce mattutina*, Act 3, Sc. 2 from *Turandot* (Puccini). In Italian. H.M.V. D.1241, 12in., 6s. 6d.

**CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA OF THE STATE OPERA HOUSE, BERLIN**, conducted by Oscar Fried.—(a) *Easter Hymn* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni) and *Bridal Chorus* from *Lohengrin* (Wagner). In German. Brunswick 80000, 12in., 6s. 6d. (b) *Spinners' Chorus* from *The Flying Dutchman* (Wagner) and *Hunters' Chorus* from *Der Freischütz* (Weber). Brunswick 80003, 12in., 6s. 6d. (c) *Grand March* and *Pilgrims' Chorus* from *Tannhäuser* (Wagner). Brunswick 80004, 12in., 6s. 6d.

**EMMY BETTENDORF** (soprano) with **CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA OF THE BERLIN STATE OPERA HOUSE**, conducted by Eduard Moerike: *Easter Hymn* and *Regina Coeli* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni). In German. Parlo. R.20017, 12in., 6s. 6d.

**CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA OF THE BERLIN STATE OPERA HOUSE**, conducted by Eduard Moerike: *Triumphal March*, Act 2, Sc. 2, from *Aida* (Verdi). In German. Parlo. R.20018, 12in., 6s. 6d.

*Anna Maria Guglielmetti*.—This soprano *leggiero* made her debut at Covent Garden recently in *Gli Ugonotti*, otherwise *Les Huguenots*, in the part of Margherita di Valois. The agreeable voice and vocal skill which she then displayed under trying circumstances are heard to better advantage in the present record. We may all be getting rather tired of the solo itself (and of a good many more like it), but it serves its purpose, presumably, for those chiefly interested, apart from its place in Donizetti's well-worn opera. Anyhow, it is nicely sung in a purely mechanical fashion, and every note of it is strictly in tune; which is something to be thankful for when you can get a steady tone in addition.

*Maria Jeritza*.—If we did not have the pleasure of hearing Jeritza *in propria persona* this season, we can at least have the satisfaction of listening to her voice in a couple of new records, which bring out with faithful accuracy her ringing tone and the effortless spontaneity of an unforced production. They are both sung in French, and "pity 'tis" that the accent should not be purer. (Truth to tell, it is very Austro-Hungarian indeed.) But both the airs are intelligently sung, and at least the right dramatic accent is always noticeable. Otherwise there is only Jeritza to distinguish their rendering from many others already in the catalogues, except that the recording is admirably clear and well defined.

*Gwendolyn Naish*.—If the *coloratur* work in the *Shadow Song* were on a level with the *staccato* and the runs in the *Magic Flute* air, this would be a highly creditable example of what a British singer with a naturally fine voice is capable of accomplishing. As it is, she has not been taught the right tempo for the *Ombra leggiera* and it drags so heavily along that all the lightness and charm disappear. Surely the conductor ought to have perceived the error, if only by the excessive length of the disc. The voice is clear and strong, especially in the declamatory tone towards the end of the Mozart; while the facility in the head register should have been accompanied by a more accurate shake.

*Arthur Jordan*.—Surely this excellent tenor can stop his tremolo before it goes further and spoils a really good voice. At the same time he should refrain henceforth from slurring nearly every downward progression to an extent that is almost

as bad as "scooping" in the other direction. How can one fail to notice these defects if watched for in a "test" record? It always goes against the grain when one hears a pleasing voice, solid diction, good intonation, and artistic intelligence practically spoilt by shortcomings of the kind I have indicated. The tone of the orchestra, too, does not balance well with the solo voice. Of the two pieces I prefer the *Vision entrancing*, which is elegantly phrased.

*Lucien Muratore*.—This disc produces such powerful sounds that I find it bearable only with an extra soft needle. The tone then is fairly sweet and pure. Here, in contradistinction to the record just noticed, I prefer the *Flower Song* from *Carmen*, although Muratore's French is inferior to his Italian. He makes a rather dull, monotonous thing of the air from *Fédora*, and I am bound to say it lends itself rather to that result; there is not an iota of variety in tone, colour, or style, and the constant *portamento* is irritating.

*Tino Pattiera*.—Originally a fine tenor voice, its owner has acquired such a habit of emitting it with breathy gasps and jerks that he is fast depriving it of all its beauty. I have often begged for "atmosphere" in these operatic records, but cannot agree that it is to be arrived at by such means. The dark tremulous tone may fairly depict Turiddu's state of suppressed excitement during the tragic interviews with Lola and his mother; but the same ejaculatory style all through is really too much—a little of it goes quite a long way. If Tino Pattiera wants to imitate a good model for well-controlled passion he should listen to Aureliano Pertile.

*Tito Schipa*.—These charming examples from operas by Delibes and Massenet are welcome, not only for their own sake, but because they exhibit the talent of the singer in its most favourable light—that is to say, under the soothing influence of a soft needle for the drawing room. Gramophones are getting so powerful in these days that Italian tenors with a *mezza voce* or even a *piano* like Tito Schipa's have no further need to put forth their full strength in refined French music. Nevertheless the artist phrases both airs with elegance, and engenders a wish to hear him on the stage both in *Lakmè* and *Werther*. The recording, too, is irreproachable.

*Cecil Sherwood*.—I have ascertained that this tenor is by birth an Australian who has lived in Italy for fifteen years. Hence the impeccable accent and the ultra-Italian method. For lovers of the latter doubtless nothing could be more acceptable than Mr. Sherwood's vocal concept of these airs by Bellini and Boito—the white open tone, the tolerably constant *vibrato*, the prevailing tendency to shout every phrase. Personally I am somewhat disappointed with the record, because it is not nearly up to the singer's usual level, as evidenced in several instances that have won unqualified praise in this column.

*Alessandro Valente*.—The titles of the *Turandot* solos, like the music itself, are beginning to grow familiar. These are the two principal tenor excerpts, ably accompanied by an efficient orchestra and well conducted by Manlio di Veroli. The soloist has a sympathetic voice, a smooth scale, and a comfortable, easy style which he does not spoil by excess of energy. Both pieces are performed in a manner that does Puccini entire justice as heard apart from the stage.

*Giuseppe Danise*.—Here, again, a soft needle is advisable, the penetrating power of the vocal tone being extraordinary. This baritone is influenced, whether unconsciously or otherwise, by Chaliapin, notably in the manner of his declamation, and luckily he is intelligent enough to employ his imitative faculty to good advantage. His words are clear, his voice of splendid quality and good all through the scale; while in both airs he shows himself master alike of the significance and beauty of the music. Altogether the record is well worth possessing—an excellent specimen of good work all round.

*Carlo Galeffi*.—The record of the *Largo al factotum* is unusually good. It bears all the traces of being accented by a well-trained Italian comedian—patter crisp and distinct,

humour everywhere plenty of lively *entrain*, resonant tone in a capital voice. As usual, the comedian succeeds less completely in the more sentimental mood of a Valentine; for these new artists are not all Cottognis and Santleys; and I care less accordingly for the *Dio possente* on the reverse side. Still, taken for all in all, there is sufficient good work in or on this disc to justify my recommending it.

*Ivar Andresen*.—A typically benevolent German High Priest peeps benignly through these reproductions of the two famous airs from *The Magic Flute*. The very style of the singer has a "bless you my children!" touch, as he slowly drawls out the gracefully tender old music. He is a bass rather than a *basso profondo*, since he declines to descend to the low E at the end. But the quality of the voice is genuine and agreeable.

*Spani and Zenatello*.—There is an abundance of emotional feeling to be noted in these excerpts from Verdi's *Otello*; and really there is not much more that is fresh to be said about them. Evidently the Desdemona and the Cetello are vocally on the best of terms, and their voices, when they have to blend, do so most satisfactorily. The recording is bright, musical, and true.

*La Scala Chorus and Orchestra*.—With the advent of these magnificent selections the reproduction of *Turandot* for gramophone purposes must surely be approaching completion. Never before has a new opera been so swiftly recorded, so entirely at the disposal of a curious public. The next thing, I suggest, will be to ask the Italian marionettes at the London Scala Theatre to mount this Chinese story and act it in their own way to Puccini's music, played by H.M.V. records on a first-class H.M.V. machine, as performed by the company of La Scala at Milan. It would be very appropriate and interesting. These choruses from the second and third acts bring to my ears the precise effects that I experienced recently at Covent Garden. They could not well be more sonorous or more impressive.

*Berlin State Opera Chorus and Orchestra*.—Here is a marvellous *réchauffé* of familiar stuff with a vengeance! It represents, I suppose, the apex of the triumphs achieved, by the new recording process—for the present at any rate. By the time another total eclipse, visible in England, comes along, I dare say there will be gramophone records of choral singing to eclipse these; but the contingency seems a long way off. Alike for volume and fidelity of tone they are unsurpassable. You can enlarge or reduce dimensions—whereof there would appear in these reproductions to be a fourth—but you cannot very easily go beyond the actuality of the original. Like the records taken at our own Covent Garden or in the transept of the Crystal Palace during a Handel Festival, these choral sounds impinge upon your ears, not as if produced in the apartment where you are listening, but as if heard amid the vast spaces of the auditorium in which they were actually performed and recorded. To my ears, therefore, they are of that supreme excellence which cannot be transcended. The singing itself is of a nature to create this impression. Certainly I cannot remember to have ever heard the Easter Hymn from *Cavalleria Rusticana* or the choruses from Wagner's earlier operas so perfectly rendered in any opera house. The sonority is almost overwhelming, yet utterly free from opacity or confusion; clear enough to be dazzling, like the *feux d'artifice* of a great *coloratura* singer. The slowness of the *Bridal Chorus* from *Lohengrin* makes it one of the loveliest things imaginable, instead of the commonplace tune that it very often sounds. Oscar Fried is a conductor with imagination, and his forces faithfully reflect his refinement and intelligence, even as these records reflect their splendid efforts.

*Emmy Bettendorf* with *Ditto*.—Every word just written applies equally to the Easter Hymn conducted by Eduard Mörike with Emmy Bettendorf singing Santuzza's solo; and it fills both sides of the disc. The tone is, if anything a trifle more subdued and even more musical. The sense of space is

again amazing, while the grandeur of the ending, with the full organ and the addition of the solo voice, produces a superb effect. The same forces, minus the soprano solo, of course, furnish yet another wonderful record in the great march and chorus accompanying the triumphal return of Radamès in the second act of *Aida*. Here, again, gigantic volume is by no means the sole meritorious feature; but on the other hand slowness is a distinct disadvantage, and the prolonged, measured blare of the Egyptian trumpets becomes tedious. Besides, their quality is not equal to that of our British-made instruments, which were specially manufactured for the production of Verdi's opera in London fifty years ago.

HERMAN KLEIN.



## SONGS

H.M.V.

**Elisabeth Schumann** (soprano), in German, with orchestra : *Ständchen* (*Serenade*, Op. 17, No. 2), and *Morgen* (*To-morrow*, Op. 27, No. 4) (Richard Strauss). D.B.1010 (12in., 8s. 6d.).

**Mavis Bennett** (soprano), accompanied by Gerald Moore : *The lass with the delicate air* (Michael Arne), and *By the waters of Minnetonka* (Lieurance). B.2453 (10in., 3s.). *The Jewel Song* (from Gounod's *Faust*) with orchestra, and *La Villanella* (*Dell' Acqua*) with piano. C.1338 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**Browning Mummery** (tenor) : *My lovely Celia* (arr. Lane Wilson), and *The Love Lily* (Thompson). B.2464 (10in., 3s.).

**Derek Oldham** (tenor) : *So we'll go no more a-roving* (M. Valérie White), and *Love, could I only tell thee* (Capel). D.1228 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

**John Turner** (tenor) : *Somewhere a voice is calling* (Tate), and *Sweet early violets* (Sherrington). B.2452 (10in., 3s.).

**Percy Heming** (bass) : *All the fun of the fair* (Easthope Martin), and *Nelson's gone a-sailing* (Löhr). B.2473 (10in., 3s.).

*Ständchen* and *Morgen* are both favourites ; at the same time, on both of them there have been widely different opinions expressed. Readers should turn back to their copies of the May GRAMOPHONE, for it is but two months since Mr. Klein was not only writing of Strauss as a song-writer, but actually referring to these two songs, and to existing records of them. *Morgen* is an interesting example of Wagnerian method applied to a short, independent song. Certainly it is very lovely. Yet it seems to me a supreme example of what post-Wagnerian German music came to—unlimited richness and sweetness. I'm quite certain that if I were to hear *Morgen* very frequently I should very soon be satiated—that to continue to value it I must reserve it for very rare occasions. As for this record : here is luscious tone such as you find very rarely indeed, and transparent clarity. *Elisabeth Schumann* is, of course, exquisite. In singing, there is a natural rise-and-fall which is all too rarely given ; but there is also a dead-level, restrained line of tone which is often wanted, and which is most rarely found of all. German singers especially, even the very best, seem as if they can't help continual bulges ; *Elisabeth Schumann* is not an exception. It is easier to demonstrate than to describe. There are one or two English singers—Olga Haley, for example—who can and do sometimes give us this lovely smooth flow—in fact, *absolutely clean singing altogether*. Of *Elisabeth Schumann*'s *Ständchen* I could say a great deal,

but space is going (and I'm already expecting boiling oil for what I've said). Anyhow, I defy anyone to deny that the general effect is broken instead of smoothly-flowing, and to demonstrate that we do not get a lot of jerky, dotted (if not double-dotted) rhythm instead of smooth, swaying triple rhythm. The orchestral accompaniments are exceptionally fine.

It seems as if *Mavis Bennett* is doing far too much to do any of it thoroughly. The Arne song is the kind of music which the composer intended, as a matter of course, to be played with and varied—indeed, it is such treatment that makes the song. But all *Miss Bennett* gives us is sentimentality and rhythmic distortion. She sings the ornamented “*del-icate*” smoothly every time ; and most of the delightful little decorations of “A. L.'s” Edition (which she uses) are left out. And top notes are flat. I have treated this song in detail because it is worthily a general favourite, but belongs to a type in which we are discounting real singing by sanctioning any old sounds. In the other song, however, singer and song are ideally matched. The only fault is indistinct diction.

The second *Mavis Bennett* record arrived later than the first, and calls for a revision of a little I've said. If she is skimping some of the finer work, she is putting the very last finishing touch to other work. In case Mr. Klein is not reviewing the *Faust*, I must say that I can hardly imagine a better record of it—more subtle, perhaps, in places, but not more satisfying all round. As for the *Villanella*—for ringing high notes, agile passage work, and bright tone, this is one of the most brilliant records I've ever heard. Beyond that there is little value in the song to be given. She has a marked tendency to lose pitch. A little care with sound-box and needle is necessary.

There is hardly a possible criticism of this B.N.O.C. tenor's singing of *My lovely Celia*, except that he takes it dead slow, and this rules out some long phrasing one might have liked—not that there is any bad phrasing—in fact, some specially good, and he does bring off the pace. This is one of those lovely old English tunes everyone should have, and almost certain to be its best recording. But if I bought the record I should render the reverse side unplayable.

It seems a long time since we had a record from *Derek Oldham*, and this one is not thrilling. Still, he sings with a great deal of emotion ; even perhaps some passion ; and there is a measure of beauty in *So we'll go no more*, both in the music and in his singing. If his diction were a wee bit worse it might be unintelligible.

I can imagine that if *Turner* were to record something we needed, calling for a tenor of great power and range, one might be able to recommend him. As it is, one can only say that *Somewhere a voice is calling* can seldom have been heard to better advantage, and that it is well matched.

At last someone has had the originality to record one of the *Songs of the Fair* other than *Come to the Fair*. Here Easthope Martin rises above banality, especially in *All the Fun of the Fair*, which is very good fun indeed, and almost as exhilarating as, and less obvious than, *Come to the Fair*. There are a few baritones who might do this as well as *Percy Heming*, but none better. The Nelson song, on the other hand, is not out of the ordinary, but it will do.

### ACTUELLE.

**Jamieson Dodds** (baritone) with orchestra : *Arm, arm ye brave* (from *Judas Maccabaeus*), and *Why do the nations?* (from *Messiah*, Handel). 15246 (12in., 3s. 6d.).

This is a fine recording of a fine Handel aria with few previous recordings, and I believe no electric recording, to compete with. I don't remember a better one of Dodds, whose strong, rich, bright voice is at its best. There's only one grouse. It isn't that he shows no rhythmic sense (he must, for instance, be quite straightforward to accompany) ; but he believes in taking all the time he wants to make his telling effect, and goes beyond all bounds. Yet one feels he's brought it off. I'm not sure whose instrumentation is used—perhaps Franz's—there's a good deal of brass. Dodds is a bit heavy in the *Messiah* aria—

still, this is easily good enough to go with the other, the whole being an amazing bargain at its price. The introduction to *Why do the nations?* seems to begin in mid-ocean. We had two records of this aria in April, and now here's another. When shall we even have a fair sprinkling of Purcell's wealth of glorious arias?

#### VOCALION.

**Frank Titterton** (tenor) : *Angels guard thee* (*Berceuse de Jocelyn*, Godard) with violin and piano, and *My Queen* (Blumenthal). K.05304 (12 in., 4s. 6d.).

**Clara Serena** (contralto) with piano accompaniment played by Roy Mellish, and 'cello obbligato : *Till I wake* (from Amy Woodforde-Finden's *Indian Love Lyrics*), and *Sweet and low* (*Cradle Song* by Wallace). K.05305 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**John Buckley** with male chorus. See *Choral Reviews*.

You will find Titterton's record all you want, if you do not feel he has too much wobble. There is any amount of spirit put into both songs.

Compare recordings of *Till I wake* with others, you are not likely to find a better. This setting of *Sweet and low* (ought I to know it?) is better than most, but I find nothing inspiring in it. It is excellently sung, played and recorded. One wishes *Clara Serena* would do something really worth while. Who is the 'cellist?

#### PARLOPHONE.

**Robert Howe** (baritone) with orchestra : *The Trumpeter* (J. F. Barron and J. Airlie Dix), and *On the road to Mandalay* (Rudyard Kipling and W. Hedgecock). E.10585 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

There must be countless records of *The Trumpeter*. All I can say is, if you want these two songs together, you will get first-rate recording here. *Howe's* diction must be praised—excepting some curious pronunciations in *The Trumpeter*.

#### COLUMBIA.

**Harold Williams** (baritone) with orchestra : *Come to the cook-house door* (Newman and Charles), and *The Skipper of the Mary Jane* (Henry and Richards). 4386 (10in., 3s.).

This is one of the jolliest, also one of the clearest, records ever issued.

C. M. C.



#### BAND RECORDS

Out of a collection of really good records received this month there are two outstanding specimens of recording. The first is Zonophone No. 2909 by the **American Legion Band**. Whether this is the name of an actual band or one of those disconcerting pseudonyms I do not know; but, whichever it is, the band is a very fine one. *The Iowa Corn Song* is made into a very jolly affair, and the singing of the bandsmen is more lusty and hearty than is usually heard. *The Conqueror* is an invigorating march played with plenty of spirit. This is obviously an American recording and is the same class as the H.M.V. Sousa and Pryor recordings, which is high praise indeed.

The other outstanding record is that containing four movements from the *Coppelia Ballet Suite*, played by the **Life Guards Band** (Voc. K.05303). The four movements included are *The Hungarian Dance*, *The March of the Warriors*, *The March of the Bell*, and *The Village Wedding*. The playing of the band

in general and clarinets in particular is delightfully neat and delicate. The Concert Hall recordings made by the Vocalion Company with the Marconi apparatus have been rather variable in quality, but at their best they are something to marvel at. Their band recordings have been steadily improving, and I think that this is the best they have done yet and the realism is little short of wonderful. The result is quite different from that obtained in the last mentioned record, but with the one exception that the former recording is a little fuller in tone, these differences are mainly accounted for by the different compositions of the two bands and characters of the music played.

Another good record is that of a selection of *Students' Songs*, arranged by Shipley Douglas and played by the **Grenadier Guards Band**. The selection contains a lot of well known and cheery songs, most of which will be found in *The Scottish Student's Song Book*. The arrangement largely consists of solos for various instruments, advantage of which is taken to the full by those splendid musicians who play solo parts in this band. The finale is in the nature of a parody on the finale of the famous 1812 Overture. This is very clever, but rather incongruous.

I have never heard a military band performance of *The Merry Wives of Windsor Overture* that really satisfied me. The long held notes which are so effective when played on strings are tiresome when played on clarinets. The new record by the **Black Diamonds Band** (Zono. A.320) of this delightful music is no exception to the general rule. The playing is rather untidy and the interpretation very rigid and expressionless. Not even the recording can be praised, for it makes the band sound as much like a concertina band stiffened by a few wheezy harmoniums as anything.

The playing of the **Welsh Guards Band** in their latest record is better than some of their work I have heard of late. *Heroes of the Flag* is a march which goes with a good swing, and is played crisply. The arrangement of *Way down upon the Swanee River*, by Mr. Roberts, contains some clever and amusing variations in rhythm, and those who are not shocked by the taking of such liberties with a song like this will find this record (Aco. G.16207) quite attractive.

Combinations of brass instruments can be so effective and are so popular in many parts of the country that I have often wondered why more records made by brass quartets are not issued. The record made by the **Foden's Quartet** (Winner 4617) is good without being superlatively so. The better side of the two from every point of view is that containing a selection from *Le Prophète*, which is admirably arranged by Mr. W. Rimmer of Southport. The *Oberon Selection* seems to misfire somehow, and is rather disappointing. The arrangement in this case is much less satisfactory.

The two latest Imperial records contain selections from *The Mikado* (1751) and *Patience* (1750) respectively, played, in each case, by the **Irish Guards Band**. The band employed is on the small side, but the playing is good and the recording adequate. It would surely be difficult to find better value for money than double sided selections from these popular operas played by a band with such a reputation and priced so low as 2s. each.

The *Peer Gynt Suite*, played by the **Beltona Military Band** (Beltona 1221-2), is very well recorded, the drums and basses being particularly effective. The playing on the whole is good though it is rather inflexible in the two slower movements. In the two faster movements (*i.e.* Record No. 1222) the band give a thoroughly good performance with plenty of body and a bright tone.

The **White Military Band** is quite a new organisation to me. It is not a large band, but is good in both attack and release, is well in tune, puts plenty of dash into its playing and, so far as can be judged by the playing of marches, is under good control. Their first record contains *Sunnyfields* and *Kaiser Frederick* marches (Regal G8835). These are good marches of the old-fashioned type and quite tuneful.

W. A. C.

## MISCELLANEOUS

First of all let me thank all those readers who took the trouble to write to me or to the Editor to express confidence in my modest efforts. What I said last month was intended as a fishing, not for compliments, but for a vote of confidence ; and this I may fairly claim to have received. I shall continue my passage through the jungle with greater courage.

At this time of year one is especially on the look out for records which will please summer visitors and will float out on the evening air without displeasing the neighbours. Pre-eminently suitable are the *Chanson Hindou* (tiresomely labelled "Song of India") and *Sleeping Beauty* (waltz of Tchaikovsky's), played by the **Cleveland Orchestra** under **Sokoloff** on Brunswick 15120 (10in., 5s. 6d.) ; the *Meditation* from *Thaïs* and Thomé's *Simple Aveu*, played by the **Dajos Bela Trio** (Parlo. E.10580, 12 in., 4s. 6d.) ; and Wieniawski's arrangement of a *Faust Fantasia* (Parlo. E.10579, 12 in., 4s. 6d.), played by the **Edith Lorand Orchestra** with fine scope for Miss Lorand's own delightful playing. Of cheaper 10in. records note the gypsy tunes of the **Codolban String Quintet** on Actuelle 1360 (2s. 6d.) ; the genuine thing, but not so impressive as the **A and P Gypsies** (Brunswick 3384, 3s.), a larger combination, in two less Romany tunes (though *Frasquita* undeniably suits their style). Even **De Groot and his Piccadilly Orchestra** cannot add much freshness to *Shepherd of the Hills* and *In a little Spanish town* (H.M.V. B2467, 3s.) ; but to the *Desert Song* and Easthope Martin's *Evensong* (H.M.V. B. 2474, 3s.) the punt will glide easily enough ; and the same applies to the **J. H. Squire Celeste Octet** in Gounod's *Serenade* and Ganne's *Extase* (Col. 4382, 3s.). Louis Ganne's little orchestra at Monte Carlo introduced me to the charms of light music fittingly played fifteen years ago, and against his own *Extase* in a programme still preserved I had scribbled in pencil, "What a droll idea of ecstasy ! "

"The Desert Song" at the Drury Lane Theatre has been recorded pretty thoroughly, in the theatre itself by Columbia and in the studio by H.M.V. I can't pretend to like the music very much, nor the voices of Miss **Edith Day** (Col.) or Miss **Kathleen Hilliard** ; but the immense gusto of the performances and the brilliance of the recording, especially Columbia's, prevent tedium. **George Baker** may be the most versatile of gramophone artists, as he claims to be, but even with his fine voice and recording experience he seems to me to be beaten out of court by **Harry Welchman** and **Gene Gerrard**, whose songs he sings for H.M.V. Everybody who is interested in such things has probably heard, chosen and bought what he wants already, and I wonder whether he will agree with me that on the whole Columbia 9212 (12 in. 4s. 6d.) with "Vocal Gems" on one side and **Billy Mayerl's Piano Medley** on the other is the most desirable of the selections, and Columbia 4389 (10in., 3s.) with men singing *Eastern and Western Love* on the one side and **Gene Gerrard** with a chorus of girls singing *It* on the other, the most desirable of the others. But it is largely a matter of titles, and there is not anything really to be said against any of the records of *Desert Song*. There is, by the way, a 10in. *Selection* which has merits on Zono. 2924 (2s. 6d.) and on Regal G.8853 (2s. 6d.).

The vocal gems of "Desert Song" on H.M.V. C.1331 are backed by those of *The Blue Mazurka*, by the **Light Opera Company**, which also gives us *Lady Luck* and *The Vagabond King* on C. 1346—all loud, spirited and effective to a high degree. A *Lady Luck Selection*—I dealt with the Columbia records of this music last month—is done by the **Savoy Orpheans** on H.M.V. C.1341 : and the first *Blue Train Selection* that I have heard is by **Percival Mackey's Band** (Col. 9213), rather hurriedly recorded, I should guess. All these are 12in. and cost 4s. 6d. For 4s. you can get the vocal gems of the *Yeomen of the Guard* on Zono. A.321, with some clear, straight singing that is adequate but rather crude : and a *Queen High Selection* on Velvet Face 709, where some of the life has gone out of the charming tunes. For half a crown you can get selections from *Castles in the Air* (Regal G.8854) and *Lady*

*Luck* (Regal 8868). It needed **Ed. Lowry's** two 10in. records from *Whitebirds* to rouse me from the vocal gems trance into which I had fallen—dreaming that the *Blue Train* was thundering over me, each coach labelled differently, but pounding and banging the same succession of rhythms as the last—and **Ed. Lowry** accompanied by the **Gilt-Edged Four** is something to break the monotony. Yes, Sir. Try these songs, *Whitebirds—Da Da Da* and *I've got a wonderful girl* (Col. 4390, 3s.) and *The Oliver Twist* and *Everyone is trying the Charleston now* (Col. 4391, 3s.). They will set your corpuscles dancing.

Of the pipe organ records I recommend **Reginald Foort** (H.M.V. B.2463, 3s.) in the *Desert Song* and *Riff Song* ; **Jack Courtney** in *Shalimar* and *Forgive me* (Col. 4373, 3s.) and **Jesse Crawford** spreading his chords (or whatever his peculiar effect is called) more than ever in *Blue Skies* and *Falling in love with you* (H.M.V. B.2460, 3s.) ; while on the grand organ, with harp accompaniment, **Arnold Greir** is as good as one could wish in Schubert's *Serenade* and the *Intermezzo* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Zono. 2926, 2s. 6d.).

**Eileen Andjelkovitch** makes violin solos, rather strident but smartly played, with **Billy Desmond** to sing the refrain of *Niña* and *Beautiful Evening* (Aco. G.16206, 2s. 6d.), and the same stridency in recording mars for me the banjo and guitar solos of that virtuoso, **Mario de Pietro** (Aco. G. 16205, 2s. 6d.), so that I much prefer **Len Fillis** who, with **Syd Bright** at the piano, makes very engaging records of *Sort of Uncertain* (banjo) and *My Rose* (Hawaiian guitar) on Col. 4383 (3s.), and of *Because I love you* (Hawaiian steel guitar) and *Meadow Lark* (guitar) on Col. 4372 (3s.). The syncopated piano solo surely need not be so wooden as that of **Ken Edwards** on Voc. X.9999 (3s.), as is shown by **Tony Lowry** playing *Only a rose* with his usual charm and **Rudolf Friml** giving us his own *Song of the Vagabonds* on Col. 4377 (3s.).

I dare not advise all and sundry to rush off and buy two remarkable records issued by Parlophone ; but everyone who takes the slightest interest in American "hot" playing must get **Joe Venuti**, prince of jazz violinists, in *Wild Cat* and *Sunshine* (Parlo. R. 3330, 3s.) and **Boyd Senter**, no stranger to the gramophone, in two clarinet solos, *Clarinet Tickle* and *Bluin' the Blues* (Parlo. R. 3329, 3s.). In both records **Ed. Lang** plays the guitar, a master of his art ; and outrageous, impudent, insufferable as their performances may seem to some ears, there is no question but that all three are craftsmen of the highest rank in their profession. They make quieter record of *Beef-stew* and *You're the one and only* on Actuelle 11374 (2s. 6d.).

Of spoken records, a fairly good memory of the immortal *A Sister to Assist 'er* is put on two sides of a 10in. record by **Joan and Doris Emney** (Zono. 2931, 2s. 6d.) without displacing H.M.V. C. 492 ; and **Billy Bennett**, whose voice records well, is himself in *No Power on Earth* and *The Charge of the Tight Brigade* on Col. 9205 (12in., 4s. 6d.). An expensive record.

There remain forty-seven records in my pile to be considered.

My feeling last month that Zonophone have got a cinch in **Florence Oldham** and her accompanist is increased this month. She sings with a great deal of the quiet humour *It takes a good man to do that* and *It takes a good woman to keep a good man at home*—a nice pair of titles (Zono. 2929, 2s. 6d.). **Annette Hanshaw**, too, charms by her quietness, and even gives a freshness to *Chérie, je t'aime* (*Chérie, listen again* is a formidable rhyme) and *Calling me home* (Actuelle 11361, 2s. 6d.). The accompaniments are pleasing, better than in her *Ain't he sweet ?* and *It all depends on you* (Actuelle 11388, 2s. 6d.). **Dorrie Dene**, on the other hand, is boisterous and "indescribable" in *Marmaduke* and *Sing Hallelujah* (Voc. X10007, 3s.), and carries it off well ; but **Vaughn de Leath** and party in the old kind of laughing record (Aco. G.16210, 2s. 6d.) is a complete failure. Of the men, **Norman Long** is the typical entertainer (H.M.V., B.2454, 3s.), **Leslie Sarony** is slick and distinct in poorish songs and patter (H.M.V., B.2472, 3s.), and **Jay**

**C. Flippen and his Gang** seem to me ineffective and rather coarse in attack (Actuelle 11364, 2s. 6d.). I am already beginning to tire of **Harry Richman** because his singing of *Blue Skies* is so insensitive (Brunswick 5-11511, 3s.). It's the same-ness of treatment that is disappointing, and though I can imagine him bringing down the house every time with *Mine*, I grudge him his reputation as the "greatest living artist of his kind." He is much better in *The Birth of the Blues*, a rather fascinating song, and *It all depends on you* (Brunswick 3501, 3s.). An undoubted best seller. The accompaniments are first-rate, and **Ed. Lowry** is another singer of the same genre who owes a lot to the **Gilt Edged Four** for his success. Besides the records mentioned above he has two more on Col. 4375 and 4376 (3s. each). *High, high, high up in the hills* gets exactly the treatment that it deserves and I recommend 4375 as a sample of this attractive combination.

*The Birth of the Blues* as sung by **Willard Robison** (Actuelle 11394, 2s. 6d.) I should be prepared to forego, but his *Truthful Parson Brown* on the other side is a companion to the haunting *The Devil is afraid of music*, and should not be missed. His June record, with *Why do you love?* and his own *G String Melody* (11362) is very good, and I do not find his style pall; nor does that impish style of **Cliff Edwards** in *I never knew what the moonlight could do* and *If you can't land 'er on the old veranda* (Act. 11365, 2s. 6d.). **Art Fowler**, whose smile and sense of rhythm have made him the rage of London, sings *Crazy Words* and the amusing *No wonder she's a blushing bride* (Act. 11389, 2s. 6d.), but I doubt if he'll have quite the vogue of a Jack Smith purely as a recording singer.

The **Revellers—Singing Sophomores—Merrymakers** combination seems to me still unrivalled for a singing ensemble, and the *Birth of the Blues* (H.M.V. B.2468, 3s.) and *Mine* (Brunswick 3441, 3s.) are good examples of their art. In contrast to them rather crude—but this is hypercritical, because they are wonderfully accomplished in their own way—are the **Four Aristocrats** (good accompaniments) on H.M.V. B.2459 (3s.), the **Syncopated Singers** on Aco. G.16209 (2s. 6d.) and the **Joe Tunbridge Quartette** on Regal G.8856 and 8857, which last I seem to recognise in the **Four Just Fellers** on Zono. 2930 (2s. 6d.). Somewhat different in style, because it is mainly solo work, are **The Yacht Club Boys** on Brunswick 3270, 3405 and 3409 (3s. each). They are full of American aplomb, and very distinct, and one song on each record is much better than the other, to my taste, so I won't choose between the three. By the way how light and handy these new Brunswick records are—almost featherweights.

Of the duets the **Smith Brothers** are better on H.M.V. B.2465 (3s.) in *Hoosier Sweetheart* and *You gonna be home to-night?* than on Actuelle 11368 (2s. 6d.), where they are paired with

two terribly metallic singers. **Layton and Johnstone** give us one of their most typical records in *She wants persuading* and *When autumn leaves* (Col. 4374, 3s.), so I have no compunction in advising Harry Richman's record rather than theirs in *The Birth of the Blues* and *It all depends on you* (Col. 4398, 3s.). **Dalhart and Robison** (Zono. 2927, 2s. 6d.), the **Radio Imps and Hare and Jones** (Imperial 1752, 2s.) and **Kirkby and Hudson** (Winner 4627, 2s. 6d.) suffer in comparison, but are up to a good standard.

The duplication of the songs defeats me, and I have already recommended about eighty per cent. of what I have heard. The fact is that the titles must be the deciding factor; no one can want more than one version of these idiotic songs, and the first on the market or the favourite singer wins every time. The most reliable singers are **Billy Desmond** or **John Thorpe** (Aco. and Imperial), **Fred Douglas** (Regal) and **Alec Ward** (Actuelle); **Bobby Gray**, still a marvel of recording (Winner), **Talbot O'Farrell** (Imperial) and **Dick Henderson** (Imperial) and even **G. H. Elliott** have their faithful followers; and all these seven do their usual turns this month successfully. **Tom Kinniburgh**, as might be expected, makes a good cheap record (Imperial 1754, 2s.) of *The Holy City* and *Ora pro nobis*; but the gem of this heap is another Imperial, **William Francis**, a tenor, singing Miss Sybil Thorndike's favourite song, Purcell's *Passing by* (or *There is a lady kind and fair*) and *Macushla* (1753, 2s.). I hope that "H.T.B." will not miss this; it is not superbly sung—let me be clear—but to get it at all for 2s. is great news. Note also a good cheap version of Toselli's *Serenade* by **Barrington Hooper** on Zono. 2925 (2s. 6d.).

PEPPING.

#### LATE NEWS.

##### A Selected List.

Neglecting orchestral and instrumental, band and miscellaneous, for which the reviewers have not starred any particular records, I give the following naps:—

**York Minster Choir**, Byrd, H.M.V., C. 1334, 4s. 6d.  
**Bettendorf and Chorus**, Cavalleria Rusticana, Parlo, R. 20017, 6s. 6d.  
**Jamieson Dodds**, Handel, Actuelle, 15246, 3s. 6d.  
**Valente**, Turandot, H.M.V., B. 2458, 3s.  
**Paul Whiteman**, Birth of the Blues, H.M.V., B. 5270, 3s.

Remarkable value for 20s. 6d.

London Editor.

**ZONOPHONE**

VOCAL GEMS FROM GILBERT & SULLIVAN

12 Inch "Yeomen of Guard"	A 321 "H.M.S. Pinafore"	A 317 "Iolanthe"	4/-
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Electrical Records

## NEW-POOR RECORDS

BELTONA.—Two very nice CONTRALTO discs head this list of selections, *Bantry Bay* (2s. 6d.) and Gounod's *Ave Maria* (2s. 6d.). There are two SCOTS discs, *When you and I were young*, *Maggie* (2s. 6d.), sung by a tenor, and a psalm tune *Kilmarnock* (3s.), played on an organ showing good pedal tone.

JAZZ, *Valse Huguette* (2s. 6d.).

BRUNSWICK.—A delightful TZIGANE record by the A. & P. Gipsies\*\*\* *Frasquita* (3s.) must not be missed by anybody, and there is a delightful DANCE disc of *Indian Butterfly*, played in most delicate style entirely different from that of any other dance band I ever heard. A wonderful lady whistler has a solo part.

EDISON BELL SPECIAL.—Welcome to a new issue by a great house. These records will be of high class music, played by expensive performing units, but the prices are to be only 3s. and 4s. 6d. for the 10in. and 12in. records respectively. The first list comprises two 10in. records and six 12 in., entirely of modern BALLET MUSIC, played by the orchestra of the Russian Ballet, under M. Deffosse. The 10in. pair of discs is of *The Three Cornered Hat*, and then there is a 12in. pair of discs each of *The Fire Bird*, \*\*\**Petrouchka* and *Prince Igor*. The recording is exceptionally good, the harp and the timpani always being convincing.

IMPERIAL.—Dealers in these records will find the FOX TROT *One alone* (2s.), played by Sam Lanin's orchestra, a real "best seller." Really nice vocal numbers are *By the Old Red Mill* (2s.), *Passing by* (2s.), and *Roses for Remembrance* (2s.)

PARLOPHONE-ODEON.—While my heading prevents me from referring to these records individually, I must say they come within my new category of "ultra-brilliant" records, the tone quality being particularly full, bright and clean, and every consonant telling microphonically.

PARLOPHONE.—There are more "ultra-brilliant" records this month with phenomenally great, bright and defined tone and instrumental characteristics. I have put three stars against them. \*\*\**Cavalleria Rusticana*, Edith Lorand's ORCHESTRA (4s. 6d.), which also plays two magnificent waltzes; \*\*\**The Flower's Dream* (4s. 6d.). Of the Berlin Opera House ORCHESTRALS, I plump unhesitatingly for Dr. Weissmann's group—*Don Juan* (4s. 6d.). A dulcet recording of the PIANOFORTE suitable for hard harsh machines, *Ballade and Waltz*, Chopin (4s. 6d.).

In the 10in. group there is an example of CLARINET playing extraordinary in \*\*\**Bluin' the Blues* (3s.).

VELVET FACE.—Of the 10in. numbers of 2s. 6d. I select VIOLIN AND PIANO *Air on the G String*, played by Zacharewitch. *Londonderry Air*, played on the cello by Pini, and *O rest in the Lord*, sung by Edith Furmedge. Of the 12in. numbers at only 4s. there is a splendid VIOLIN AND PIANO \*\*\**Scherzo-Tarantelle*, Zacharewitch, and song *The Flight of Ages*, Edith Furmedge.

WINNER.—My favourite singer of POPULAR SONGS, Bobby Gray, sings *Romany* (2s. 6d.). There are two more of the Sacred records by the wonderful ensemble on Whitfields Tabernacle *Aberystwyth* (2s. 6d.), and *Rock of Ages* (2s. 6d.)

ULTIMATE SELECTION.—ORCHESTRAL \*\*\**Cavalleria Rusticana*. PARLO. \*\*\**The Flower's Dream*. PARLO.

VIOLIN AND PIANO: \*\*\**Scherzo-Tarantelle*. V.F.

CONTRALTO: *The Flight of Ages*. V.F.

BALLET MUSIC: \*\*\**Petrouchka*. EDISON-BELL SPECIAL.

TZIGANE: \*\*\**Frasquita*. BRUNSWICK. DANCE: *Indian Butterfly*. BRUNSWICK.

CLARINET: \*\*\**Bluin' the Blues*. PARLO.

H. T. B.



## DANCE NOTES

By J. W. G.

In the ensuing notes, thick type represents the highest standard of excellence; two stars and one star denote the descending standards, whereas records which are decidedly inferior are omitted altogether.

It always seems to me a great pity that the accordien is not given a more prominent place in the various bands to-day. The possibilities of this instrument have only been revealed to many of us since the popularity of the Tango and Paso-doble (now, alas, on the decline), but in the few fox-trots in which I have heard it used (notably the Columbia version of "Sam, the Accordion man"), quite a rare sense of rhythm, and incidentally "snap," has been obtained by its use. For rhythmic dances such as the Charleston it is, in my opinion, almost indispensable. I have endeavoured to differentiate between fox-trot, Charleston, and Black-bottom rhythms, but broadly speaking the fox-trot can be danced to all three of them. I have treated the so-called "Drag fox-trot" and the Black-bottom as one and the same thing.

ACO (2s. 6d.).

Both the Lyricals and Harry Bidgood give us some good records this month, the former being one of the best bands I have heard for keeping a quiet, consistent Charleston rhythm.

G.16213.—\*\**He's the last word* (Charleston) and *You know I love you* (fox-trot) (The Lyricals). The former has a haunting melody.

G.16214.—Positively—absolutely (Charleston) and *Ya Gonna be Home To-night* (Charleston) (The Lyricals).

G.16216.—*Tea-Time to-morrow* (Charleston) and *I'm looking over a four-leaf clover* (fox-trot) (Harry Bidgood and his Orchestra).

G.16217.—\*\**Valse Huguette* (Vagabond King) (Waltz) (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra). \**Tell me To-night* (fox-trot) (Club Maurice Orchestra). The waltz is very well played.

ACTUELLE (2s. 6d.).

The thing that gave me most pleasure in listening to these records was the uncommonly quiet yet peculiarly "snappy" playing of the Red Heads and the California Ramblers; to get these two assets together is indeed an achievement. Taken as a whole, the records are well above the average.

11347.—*Get with* (Charleston) and *Get a load of this* (Blues) (The Red Heads). The former has a most fascinating unobtrusive rhythm.

11348.—\*\**Muddy Waters* (Black Bottom) (Irvin Abrams and his Orchestra). Trumpet raucous! and \*\**There ain't no Maybe* (Charleston) (Willard Robison and his Orchestra).

11349.—\**Mobile Mud* (Charleston) and \*\**Tampico* (fox-trot) (Deep River Orchestra).

11350.—*My Regular Girl* (fox-trot) and *Yankee Rose* (fox-trot march) (Willie Creager and his Orchestra). The march is played more slowly than the other versions of it.

11351.—\*\**Whistle away your Blues* (Charleston) and *When Lights are low in Cairo* (fox-trot) (Victor Sterling and his Band). The former is a Charleston of the milder variety—very well played.

11354.—**Crazy words, crazy tune** (Black Bottom) and **Cock-a-Doodle** (Charleston) (California Ramblers). In the Black Bottom the playing is excellent whilst the Charleston is played with a nice quiet rhythm.

11355.—\**It made me happy* (fox-trot) (Phil Napoleon Orchestra) and \*\**Ain't she Sweet* (Charleston) (Lew Gold and his Orchestra). The latter is another good record of this excellent tune.

11356.—**Sunday** (Charleston) (Sam Lanin and his Orchestra) extremely well played, and **I'll Fly to Hawaii** (fox-trot) (Harry Reser and his Orchestra). Especially do I like the middle part of this.

11357.—**Roses for Remembrance** (fox-trot) (Stillman's Orioles) very poor altogether, and \*\**It all depends on you* (Lido Lady) (fox-trot) (Ben Selvin's Dance Orchestra). This is fine playing, rivalling Teddy Brown and his Xylophone.

11359.—\*\**She's still my baby* (Charleston) (Signorelli's Orchestra) and *I don't want nobody but you* (Charleston) (Nathan Glantz and his Orchestra). The latter band's idea of time is not beyond reproach.

11376.—\*\**You should see my Tootsie* (Charleston), and \**Here or There* (Charleston) (The Red Heads).

11383.—*The Devil is afraid of Music* (Blues) (Willard Robison and his Orchestra) and \*\**The Music of a Mountain Stream* (fox-trot) (Deep River Orchestra). The latter is very good.

## BRUNSWICK (3s.).

I think the less said about this month's Brunswick issues the better. Those noted below are quite good, but there isn't a passable tune among the others. The Company would do well to realize that a good band does not necessarily mean a good record.

3461.—\*\**The Cat* (Black Bottom) and *I'm back in love again* (fox-trot) (Isham Jones' Orchestra). The former has an attractive rhythm.

3475.—\*\**Silver Song Bird* (fox-trot) and \*\**Indian Butterfly* (fox-trot) (Ernie and his Hotel McAlpine Orchestra). Quite the best I've heard of the latter tune.

3476.—\*\**My Sunday Girl* (fox-trot) (Ben Selvin and his Orchestra) and *If tears could bring you back to me* (fox-trot) (Park Lane Orchestra). The former is a fine performance, but is paired off with such a poor tune.

3477.—**Boneyard Shuffle** (Black Bottom) and **Buddy's Habits** (Charleston) (Red Nichols and his Five Pennies).

3496.—*Following you around* and \*\**I'm in love again* (Black Bottom) (Ben Bernie and his Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra). A pleasing tune played in rather quick time.

3504.—\*\**Hoosier Sweetheart* (Charleston) and \**Close to your Heart* (fox-trot) (Ben Selvin and his Orchestra). The Charleston is a cheery tune, excellently played..

## COLUMBIA (3s.).

4378.—\* *Vagabond King* (waltz) and \*\**Nesting Time* (fox-trot) (Piccadilly Revels Band).

4380.—**I wonder how I look when I'm asleep** (fox-trot) and **Fire** (Charleston) (Harry Reser's Syncopators).

4381.—\*\**Cryin' for the Moon* (Charleston) (Al Handler and his Alamo Café Orchestra) and *Hugs and Kisses* (Earl Carroll's Vanities Orchestra). The former is played with fire, but is badly let down by its mate.

4392.—\*\**Birth of the Blues* (fox-trot) (Leo Reisman and his Orchestra) and *It all depends on you* (Lido Lady) (Charleston) (Fred Rich and his Hotel Astor Orchestra).

4393.—**The Blue Train** (Charleston) and **Swiss Fairyland** (Blue Train) (Charleston) (Debroy Somers Band).

## HIS MASTER'S VOICE (3s.).

The H.M.V. batch of records this month is well up to the highest standard. "The Birth of the Blues" is undoubtedly the tune of the moment, and Paul Whiteman's version of it is by far the best. The Orpheans seem to play much better than usual.

B.5255.—\*\**Julius* (fox-trot) and \*\**My Sunday Girl* (Black Bottom) (Jack Hylton's Hyltonians). Those who prefer a fox-trot should buy the Brunswick version of the latter.

B.5256.—\**Castilian Nights* (fox-trot) and \**Every little thing* (fox-trot) (Hylton's Hyltonians).

B.5258.—**Where do you work-a, John?** (6-8 one-step) and **Underneath the Weeping Willow** (fox-trot) (Savoy Orpheans). Here we have yet another original version of this rollicking tune, as good as the others. The latter is a delightful smooth fox-trot, in quick time.

B.5259.—**Colette** (fox-trot) and **A little Change of Atmosphere** (fox-trot) (Savoy Orpheans).

B.5260.—\*\**Tuck in Kentucky* (Charleston) and *My Sweetie can't know what love means* (Charleston) (Savoy Orpheans). The former is one of those nice quiet Charlestons.

B.5262.—**I love the College Girls** (fox-trot) (Waring's Pennsylvanians) and **Adios** (fox-trot) (Nat Shilkret and his Orchestra).

B.5263.—\**Huguette* (Vagabond King) (waltz) (Savoy Orpheans) and \**To-night you belong to me* (Waltz) (Sylvians).

B.5264.—**Blue Pipes of Pan** (Lady Luck) (fox-trot) and **Syncopated City** (Lady Luck) (Black Bottom) (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra).

B.5265.—*If* (waltz) (Jack Hylton's Hyltonians) and *I've learnt a lot* (Lady Luck) (fox-trot) (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra).

B.5266.—**Nesting time** (fox-trot) and **Ting-a-ling** (waltz) (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra.).

B.5267.—\*\**Shalimar* (waltz) and \*\**I'm looking over a four-leaf clover* (fox-trot) (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra, with cinema organ). A good novelty. The organ has a pleasing effect, giving breadth to the whole.

B.5268.—*Oh me, oh my!* (fox-trot) and **A Lane in Spain** (fox-trot) (Savoy Orpheans).

B.5269.—\**Sweet Thing* (fox-trot) and \*\**Schoolday Sweethearts* (waltz) (Nat Shilkret and his Orchestra). Poor tunes very well played.

B.5270.—**The Birth of the Blues** (fox-trot) and **It all depends on you** (fox-trot) (Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra). The former, a fox-trot in slow time, will be all the rage.

B.5272.—\**Tea Time To-morrow* (fox-trot) (Savoy Orpheans) and \**Since I found you* (fox-trot) (Savoy Havana).

B.5273.—\*\**Tumble-down Cottage of Dreams* (fox-trot) and \**I don't mind being all alone* (fox-trot) (Savoy Havana).

B.5281.—\*\**'Deed I do* (fox-trot) (Ben Pollack and his Californians). This is played in slow time. \*\**Look up and Smile* (fox-trot). (Nat Shilkret and his Orchestra).

B.5282.—**Ev'ry little while** (fox-trot) (George Olsen and his Music) and **Have you forgotten** (Jan Garber and his Orchestra).

## IMPERIAL (2s.).

I'm glad to find Sam Lanin again in the list, and his rendering of "Take in the Sun" is most refreshing, as also is that of the Hollywood Dance Orchestra in "Brown Sugar."

1761.—\*\**Brown Sugar* (Black Bottom) and *Tell me To-night* (fox-trot) (Hollywood Dance Orchestra).

1762.—\**Deed I do* (Charleston) and \**Sweet Thing* (one-step) (Al Lenty's Dance Orchestra).

1763.—\**One Alone* (The Desert Song) (fox-trot) and \*\**Take in the Sun* (Charleston) (Sam Lanin and his Orchestra).

## PARLOPHONE (Royalty Records, 3s.).

The Parlophone send us only three records this month, but

what records ! Some of the tunes are old favourites in modern guise.

R.3325.—*Yankee Rose* (March fox-trot) and *I'm looking over a four-leaf clover* (fox-trot) (Sam Lanin and his famous Players).

R.3326.—*A Hot time in the Old Town* (Blues) and *The Darktown Strutters' Ball* (Charleston) (Miff Mole's Molers).

R.3327.—\*\**Farewell Blues* (Blues) and \*\**I wish I could shimmy like my Sister Kate* (Blues) (Goofus Washboards) Two tunes which were popular some years ago when the "Blues" was danced a lot.

#### REGAL (2s. 6d.).

G.8861.—\*\**I'm looking over a four-leaf clover* (fox-trot) and \**It made you happy when you made me cry* (fox-trot) (Jack Payne and his Hotel Cecil Orchestra).

G.8864.—\*\**In a little Spanish Town* (Waltz) and \*\**I Love the College Girls* (Charleston) (Jack Payne and his Hotel Cecil Orchestra). The Charleston is in very quick time.

#### VOCALION (3s.).

Once again the playing of the Riverside Dance Band calls for praise.

X.10008.—\**It all depends on you* (Lido Lady) (fox-trot) and \*\**The Birth of the Blues* (fox-trot) (Teddy Brown and his Café de Paris Band). The latter is well played, but I prefer Paul Whiteman's record of these two tunes.

X.10010.—\*\**Why did you say Good-bye?* (waltz) and \*\**Here or there* (fox-trot) (Riverside Dance Band). Delightful playing, but why are waltz tunes always so poor ?

X.10011.—*So Blue* (waltz) and \*\**Positively—Absolutely* (Charleston) (Riverside Dance Band). The latter is an amusing tune played with a quiet Charleston rhythm.

#### WINNER (2s. 6d.).

I have seldom heard a poorer collection of tunes, and even Alfredo and his Band cannot redeem them from boredom, although they do their best.

4622.—*Bandy Bandoliero* (6-8 one-step) and *My girl's fine and dandy* (fox-trot) (Regent Dance Orchestra). One-steps must be played with sparkle—this one certainly is not.

4628.—\**Caring for you* (fox-trot) and \**Jog, jog, jogging along* (fox-trot) (Alfredo's Band). Trying tunes, but the playing is good and the rhythm is smooth.

4630.—*Lantern of Love* (Castles in the Air) (fox-trot) and *Baby* (Castles in the Air) (fox-trot) (Alfredo's Band). The same remark as above applies to this record.

#### ZONOPHONE (2s. 6d.).

When I received a record by the Five Harmoniacs last month my spirits rose, and I saw visions of a Zonophone series of records by this first-rate "hot band," to relieve the monotony of their two stock bands, whose "straight" playing is inclined to pall. Come on, Zonophone, give us some more like "Sadie Green" !

2934.—\*\**Honolulu Song Bird* (fox-trot) and *Shalimar* (waltz) (Devonshire Restaurant Dance Band). The former is a good smooth fox-trot.

2935.—\*\**When the Guards go by* (one-step march) and \**Huguette* (waltz) (Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra).

2936.—\*\**A little Nightie hanging on the line* (Charleston) and *Bid your troubles all good-bye* (fox-trot) (Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra).

2937.—\**Oriental Moonlight* (Charleston) and \**Side by Side* (Charleston) (Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra). Two quiet Charlestons.



## Gramophone Societies' Reports

A mistake was made last month in the announcement that Mr. J. R. Holmes was the Hon. Sec. of the NOTTINGHAM GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY. Mr. Holmes is the Hon. Treasurer, and Mr. Arthur Statham, 26, Mansfield Road, Nottingham, remains the Hon. Secretary.

The BLACKBURN AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY held its first annual General Meeting in April, received very satisfactory reports from the Hon. Treasurers and the Hon. Secretary, elected officers and committee for its second season and started with recitals by the President, Dr. M. N. Greeves, and the Hon. Sec., Mr. T. C. Egan, in April; a Guessing of Records competition on May 10th, which was won by Mr. C. A. Critchley, and a recital of *The Mikado* on May 24th.

The Lecture-Recital given by Mr. J. M. Riddick on Mozart to the LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY the other evening was illustrated by a programme which is worth noting; the Sonata in B flat, Marjorie Hayward and Una Bourne: "Eine kleine Nachtmusik," the Lener Quartet: the "Haffner" Symphony in D; three numbers from the Requiem Mass: "Se vuol ballare," "Now your days of philandering," "Voi che sapete," "Gentle Lady" and "Batti, batti," sung by De Luca, Peter Dawson and Elisabeth Schumann.

■ Of the London Societies, the NORTH WEST GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY had a programme of recent operatic and chamber music records at the June meeting, with a valuable commentary from the historical and musical standpoints by Mr.

Philip B. Roberts. The SOUTH LONDON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY dealt with records of Verdi's *Otello* on May 26th, ranging from Tamagno to the recent Spani-Zenatello duet. Ruffo and Melba provided the best of the old recordings. This building up of operas from the catalogues is a valuable work very suitable for Societies to undertake, especially if the sense of the meeting is taken on the merits of alternative renderings of each aria.

The SOUTH-EAST LONDON RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY had a summery programme at the June meeting, with plenty of variety. The Casse-Noisette Suite, Prince Igor Overture, and "The Lament of Fanaid Grove" (Beatrice Harrison) found special favour. The July meeting is to be devoted to Light Opera.

ILFORD AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY must be added to our list of Societies. The Hon. Sec. is Mr. H. Whitehead, 53 Kingston Road, Ilford, and the first meeting went off very successfully with a varied programme of records and a demonstration of the Donsona Gramophone.

The June meeting of the CENTRAL LONDON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY was marked by a talk on Sir Edward Elgar by Mr. J. S. Veal, with illustrations from the Enigma Variations. Among the records played during the evening the new H.M.V. Nightingale record, Handel's Concerto in G minor (Dr. Henry Ley), "The Three Bears" (Jack Hylton's Band), Carnival Overture (R.A.H.O.) and Casse Noisette Suite (Parlophone) may be noted. July meeting on the 5th; Hon. Sec., Mr. J. T. Fisher, 28A, Fieldhouse Road, Balham, S.W.12.

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# THE GRAMOPHONE IN SCHOOL

## A NEW FEATURE *conducted by W. R. ANDERSON*

AS this is the concluding article of the present series my readers may find it useful, if they care to do so, to read again the former articles (in the issues of September, October and November, 1926, and February, March, May and June of this year). I have found that by taking a series as a whole one can better gauge the author's emphasis, and find out which aspects of his subject he deems most important. In dealing with so large a matter as this I have, I hope wisely, tried to restrict myself largely to principles, in getting out which I have been glad to have the views of representative teachers such as Mr. Radcliffe, Dr. White and the Rev. J. B. McElligott. In addition we have named a good number of tried and trusted records, which should keep any class busy for a year or two.

To the books named in an earlier article as standard guides you might add "The Appreciation Class," by Stewart Macpherson (Jos. Williams). It has good lists of music for presentation to children, and mentions a fair number of records. Much practical advice as to music for teaching to still younger children (work which I personally think more difficult, if not more responsible) will be found in another book published by the same firm—Miss Lilian Bucke's "Music in the Kindergarten and Lower Forms"; and for the more advanced teacher-musician, Mr. Macpherson's "Music and its Appreciation," an older book issued by Williams, may be recommended. It is one of the testaments, you may say, of appreciation. With the more general assistance of Mr. Scholes's various volumes on composers, musical history and selected records, all published by the Oxford University Press, there is ample material for self-training. I would, however, stress the point that every keen teacher who is in charge of any musical tuition should, in addition to his training college work and any private teaching he may have had, take an occasional course in vacation time. Many, I know, are in the habit of doing so, but those whose experience of these affairs is small may perhaps feel inclined to pursue this side of their development rather more strongly, if they are sufficiently keen on music. Any teacher can readily find out, from his professional papers and his colleagues and heads, how to get into touch with the organisers of most of the vacation courses. The rather more advanced in musical knowledge may try for one of the places in the Board of Education's course held (up to 1926) in London, or may like to go amongst avowed musicians (most of them in the profession or training for it), in the course organized by the Training School for Music Teachers. Particulars of this may be had from 72,

High Street, Marylebone. This School has courses at other holiday periods than midsummer, and also runs week-end courses. I mention this course because it seems to me a well-organized, broadly-based scheme (which includes, by the way, a good element of real recreational holiday).

I had hoped to be able to review the new H.M.V. series of educational records, but these are not quite ready in time for attention in this series. I shall await them with interest, and hope to notice them in a future issue. Meanwhile, one of H.M.V.'s useful pamphlets may be mentioned—the one giving a sketch of the madrigal, by Dr. Fellowes, with particulars of a number of records of these songs and of the folk dances which I mentioned in my second article, and which were reviewed in September, 1926 (page 169). This pamphlet may be had free. While I mention folk music I would recommend the recent Beltona records of two folk-songs, sung with admirable clarity and cool charm by Miss Annette Blackwell. The number is 6074 (3/-). The record is particularly useful because the words can be heard so distinctly, and the singing is a good model of simplicity of style and vocal quality to put before children. Another pleasing record issued by the same firm contains the happy little song of Haydn, *My mother bids me bind my hair*, and Frank Bridge's *Love went a-riding*, the first of which especially is, as sung by this artist, attractive and appealing to children of what one may call middle age.

Records should always be chosen with one eye upon style in performance. However good the music, if it is poorly presented something is lost, and the opportunity of teaching the children to appreciate style, which Mr. McElligott emphasized last month, is lost. In this connection the National Gramophonic Society's records are admirable. I advise readers to write for the free catalogue of records recently issued. Among those of value in any survey of music's development may be noted particularly the Purcell Fantasies (records 51, 52, 53), those by Gibbons (29 and 30), and the several works by other "classics"—Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, Brahms and Mendelssohn—with, for those who can show how the music links up with that of the past, the work of the modernists—Schönberg, Debussy, Ravel, Bax, Goossens and Warlock. The magnificent Elgar Quintet is obviously, as to the greater part of it, for more advanced listeners. For sheer beauty of line and feeling the Corelli Christmas Concerto (69 and 70) is hard to beat. It should not always be supposed, by the way, that such a work as the Elgar is only of use to those who can follow its construction. Very often the power and

beauty in big music can be felt by almost any child, even if he can or will say nothing about it; and we can never err in surrounding a child with the fine things of art. The only difficulty in school, I know, is to find time for the entrance of sufficient of these. The wise and enthusiastic teacher will sometimes find the children willing to spend some of their own free time in listening to music. Naturally, this must not be forced upon them, but if the right attitude of attention to and respect for fine art is cultivated in the class the love for what is really lovable will show itself outside. Teachers will find it a valuable exercise to read or re-read Arnold Bennett's "Literary Taste," and apply its principles to music.

I note, by the way, that the Arts League of Service, whose travelling theatre has done so much to brighten the life of the countryside, has done something more for the cultivation of taste in art, and I wonder if the idea might be applied in music more frequently. The League has arranged portfolios of works of art, ancient and modern, and sets of lantern slides with accompanying lectures, which are to be let out on hire. The ordinary person can thus have placed before him a means for making a standard of values. The examples are chosen to illustrate the fundamental principles in composition, or certain truths of emotional significance. As *The Times* put it, the student is encouraged to look "at" the work of art instead of "through" it to the subject represented, with all the distractions which are caused by irrelevant information about race, period and style. It is essentially a scheme for breaking down the water-tight compartments between one phase of art and another, and subjecting them all to the same general consideration of their values in design. There is a special series for children, arranged with a view to introducing artistic appreciation into the natural interest in the subjects, and in this, I gather, a narrative interest is effectively employed. Teachers who may be interested in this idea, as the League has so far applied it, may care to get particulars from its offices, at 1, Robert Street, Adelphi. I wish it could be applied in music also, proceeding just as naturally from "the natural interest in the subject." That is the only useful starting-point, as we know, in teaching anything, and it provides the cue for all modern synthetic teaching, in which we build up from the known (and liked) to the unknown and to-be-liked. The aim in school is, one might almost say, less to implant sheer knowledge than to sow the seeds of the power of discriminating between values. As Sir Henry Miers has put it, "With children and with grown people alike, the right course is to give wide access to both the good and the worse, and to teach them to cultivate their own judgment." Of course, we cannot just open the door and let the good and the worse tumble in upon the poor kiddies. That would neither be teaching nor common sense. How and when to give access, and to teach, are our problems. In what

proportions should we show and teach? How much good to how much bad? Are both to be presented together? And what happens if the children manifestly prefer the bad? If we give access to either or both without teaching, what will happen? Many of these things are dealt with in the standard books on teaching, as my readers know; but not all of them, and the cognate problems that arise in teaching music, have yet been satisfactorily discussed. I feel strongly that we ought to have much more printed discussion and many more accounts of the results of experiments in music teaching. It is still easy to imagine that more has been actually proved about this subject than can really be vouched for. I wish our musical educationists were a little more urgent in getting to know more about this appreciation work. Results need collation, and there are far too few opportunities for the busiest and best informed people in the business to enlighten their fellows and help them to lay a scientific basis of knowledge about the whole matter. I have before begged my readers not to imagine the teaching of appreciation in music an easy task, even to those who know much music. As Professor John Adams once said, in the sentence "The teacher teaches John Latin," the verb governs two accusatives. It is necessary to know Latin, and equally necessary to know John. To know John in his relation to the subject is the thing; and I do not feel that we know sufficient yet about John's "reactions" (to use for once a somewhat cant term) to music.

In these articles I have been perhaps a little inconsistent on the fact that children are so largely surrounded out of school by music that vitiates their taste; therefore I believe we must try, carefully and wisely, to get them very early into the way of choosing for themselves, upon principles which interesting exposition has commended to them. I believe this *can* be done in music, just as I believe right thinking can be taught at school, apart from the means now employed. I should like to see, for instance, more attempts to teach the principles of logic to quite young children—other than by the use of Euclid or any form of mathematical training, which, excellent as it is for certain purposes, does not seem to me to be a sufficient means of teaching children to think and to understand the ways of the world they are to live in. This, however, is by the way.

Like a good many musicians who have had much to do with the crowd, I fear its influence on our children's minds. I have learned to put little or no faith in the crowd. Popular taste is very often poverty's taste—the un-choice of the man who has no idea how many things there are to choose from, and from indolence takes more or less docilely what he is offered by the commercialist. I would not make this matter of listening to music too easy. Smooth the path of the beginner by all means, and appeal constantly to his interest; but make children feel their responsibility in choosing for themselves.

This is one of the root ideas in the modern practice of education, and it should be applied in music as in anything else.

The well equipped teacher who comes to the work of introducing music to children has a delightful task before him, a privilege of the first order. If his own taste in art has been disciplined and cultivated, and if he refuses to accept in music the qualities he would reject in literature; if he is not swayed by popular success, and, above all, realizes that in the last resort the trained musician's judgments about music are the most reliable, though no man's individual opinion is infallible; if, without affectation or gush, he can

honestly say he is worthily stirred by fine music, then he ought to throw himself into the work of teaching it with all his capacity, strong in the knowledge that by hard work and brave subtlety he can add something real and lasting to his pupils' power of enjoying the world and all that therein is.

W. R. ANDERSON.

NOTE.—By arrangement, and for the better dissemination of these articles amongst school authorities, they are appearing also in the first issue of each month of *Education*, the official organ of the Association of Education Committees.



## The Brahms and Tchaikovsky String Quartets

By JOHN C. W. CHAPMAN

IT is with especial pleasure that I write of the Brahms and Tchaikovsky String Quartets. To me the records of these exquisite compositions are a source of unending delight, and each playing enhances their value. The intellectuality of Brahms forms an interesting contrast to the emotionalism of Tchaikovsky; in each case these quartets are distinguished by nobility of conception, beauty of design, and a lavish perfection of infinitely charming detail. The acquisition of the three complete works by the Catterall, Lener, and Virtuoso Quartets is an investment rather than an expenditure, and the most critical reviewers have found little to cavil at in them.

Music of this standard is not appreciated by casual and uncomprehending listeners, neither is it the exclusive property of the highly-skilled musician. It is essentially for lovers of absolute music who have attained that level of appreciation which brings realisation not only of the greatness of the music itself but of the profound genius of its creators. To hear a Tchaikovsky work can be likened to reading a fine romance—it holds one spellbound; whilst a Brahms quartet can be compared to a finely conceived essay, written in magnificent prose, to lose a phrase of which is to mar the effect of the whole. Lord Macaulay has few equals in the art of writing beautiful English; Brahms might aptly be termed the Macaulay of Music. Of his quartets Grove says: "The String Quartets, Op. 51, belong to those compositions of Brahms which are comparatively slow in their appeal to the generality of musical people; but their vogue and that of the beautiful work in B flat, Op. 67, has steadily increased; and they are now considered among the most valuable contributions to quartet literature." The records are as follow:—

C MINOR, OP. 51, NO. 1.

*Allegretto* (cut) by Flonzaley Quartet (H.M.V.).

D.B.253). The obverse is the *Scherzo* of the Beethoven Op. 18, No. 4.

Complete on four discs by Catterall Quartet (H.M.V. D.791-4).

These fine records, the first complete string quartet issued by the Gramophone Company, set the standard. At first hearing this work is difficult of appreciation. Though somewhat austere, it contains passages of remarkable beauty and amply repays close study.

A MINOR, OP. 51, NO. 2.

*Andante Moderato* (cut) by Lener Quartet (Columbia L.1520). The obverse is the lovely *Allegretto* from the Mozart Quartet in D minor.

*Truncated Version* of all four movements by the London String Quartet (Vocalion D.2110, D.2187). Beautifully played, but marred by extensive cuts.

Complete on four discs in annotated album by Lener Quartet (Columbia L.1691-4). The fine cut *Andante Moderato* referred to above is completely eclipsed by the wonderful artistry displayed in this version. The rich beauty of the work, enhanced by the technical excellence of these records, is a thing to marvel at.

B FLAT, OP. 67.

*Andante and Agitato* by London String Quartet (Columbia L.1151).

*Andante* by Grete Eweler Quartet (Parlophone E.10195).

The Parlophone *Andante* is uncut and has been well recorded by a competent body of players. The superiority of the London String Quartet under the leadership of Albert Sammons, however, makes itself felt: and the cut in the *Andante* is more than offset by the *Agitato* on the obverse. Pending the issue of the complete work, I strongly recommend these beautiful records, my preference going to the Columbia.

## THE TCHAIKOVSKY QUARTETS.

Tchaikovsky, we are informed by Kashkin, knew but little chamber music in his early years, and was positively repelled by the timbre of the string quartet. He afterwards modified his opinions, and composed three string quartets, of which the first (in D major, Op. 11) was written in 1871. Of this Grove says: "It is a clear, perfectly accessible work, which shows the composer in one of his sanest and tenderest moods."

The Virtuoso Quartet's rendering of this lovely composition is one of my favourite sets of records. The first disc I ever heard of the *Andante Cantabile* (which derives its second tune from a Russian folk song) was played by the Elman Quartet (H.M.V. D.B.652), and I still regard this as the best of the "snippets." Zonophone A.203, by the English String Quartet, containing the *Scherzo* as an obverse (my first disc of chamber music) is not up to modern standards. The Philharmonic String Quartet was responsible for my next *Andante Cantabile* (H.M.V. E.157), which I would rank as the second best "snippet," relegating to third place H.M.V. D.B.588, by Kreisler and String Quartet. Next comes Columbia L.1004, by the London String Quartet. The *Scherzo* (L.1015), by the same body of players, is eclipsed by the exquisite Lener Quartet version (L.1512), the obverse of which is the lovely Borodin *Notturno*; whilst a good uncut *Andante Cantabile* is found on Parlophone E.10165, played by the Grete Eweler Quartet, and an excellent electrically-recorded version by the Lener Quartet on Columbia L.1803.

Tchaikovsky enthusiasts, however, will naturally prefer the beautiful and adequate recording of the complete work by the Virtuoso Quartet (H.M.V. D.865-8). Unless the recent improvements in surfaces have ameliorated matters these records are marred by a persistent scratch, at its worst (such is ever the perversity of things!) in the *Andante Cantabile*. And splitting up the Fourth Movement on to two discs, which could have been avoided by coupling the *Scherzo* with the charming Glazounov *Novelette* which occupies the eighth side, is irritating and inconvenient. Apart from these criticisms I have nothing but praise. The playing of the First Movement (*Moderato e semplice*) and the familiar Second and Third Movements is masterly; whilst the Fourth Movement (*Allegro Giusto*), with its recurring three-note theme, beautiful passages for viola and 'cello, and brilliant *coda*, is a sheer delight. This work alone would establish the reputation of Miss Marjorie Hayward and her colleagues as front rank executants of chamber music.

Tchaikovsky's Second String Quartet (in F major, Op. 22) was written in 1873. "It betrays," says Grove, "the orchestral composer in its solidity of structure and striving after too-weighty effects." An excellent record of the *Scherzo*, played by the Catterall Quartet (H.M.V. D.950), is available. It is

coupled with the last side of the complete Beethoven Quartet in F major (Op. 18, No. 1).

The Third Quartet (in E flat minor, Op. 30), composed in 1876, was dedicated to the memory of the violinist Laub. Grove states that "it is undoubtedly the finest work of the three, both as regards mastery of form and the quality of the musical ideas. In its emotional mood it is distinctly akin to the Sixth Symphony and the Pianoforte Trio. It leaves us with the conviction that, had Tchaikovsky cared to persevere with the String Quartet as persistently as with the Symphony, he might have achieved increasingly fine results." The Flonzaley Quartet are responsible for a first-rate rendering of the *Scherzo* (H.M.V. D.A.601), the obverse of which is Rubinstein's *Music of the Spheres*, Op. 17, No. 2 (*Molto Lento*).

Let us hope that we shall eventually get these two works in complete form. JOHN C. W. CHAPMAN.

## NOTE ON LEAKS

By P. WILSON.

Few gramophiles take sufficient trouble to ensure that the sound conduit in their gramophones is airtight. Yet most gramophones can be improved by attention to this small point. A leak usually causes suppression and distortion in the bass. The nearer to the sound-box it is the more important as a rule are its effects.

The places where leaks usually occur are:—

- (1) between the sound-box and the tone-arm;
- (2) at one of the tone-arm joints;
- (3) at the base of the tone-arm where it is fixed to the base-board.

The first is hard to detect, but it can be assumed to be always present. To cure it it is only necessary to put a rubber umbrella ring on the tone arm and press it up to the back of the sound-box. Those who use Lifebelts should put the ring on the adaptor between the Lifebelt and the sound-box. Get a ring of as soft rubber as possible.

The second may be detected by taking off the tone-arm, pressing the palm of the hand firmly against the hole in the base and blowing through the end which takes the sound-box. If the tone-arm is airtight you can swell your cheeks as much as you like but you won't blow any air through. To stop a leak of this kind fill up the joints with vaseline. This will almost always be found to be necessary at the base of ball-bearing tone-arms where the tone-arm proper fits into the base.

The third cannot usually be detected on hornless gramophones. To make sure that there is no leak it is well to put a washer of balloon rubber between the tone-arm and the base-board (leaving a hole in the middle, of course) and to screw down the base of the tone-arm as firmly as possible.

# CORNUCOPIAE

## A Study in Gramophone Theory

By P. WILSON

### II.—GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

I DO not propose to spend much time in an explanation of the elementary theory of sound. That can be found in most text books. A very simple and illuminating account is given in Prof. Miller's book. Some of the principles, however, are so important and the angle from which we gramophiles approach them so unusual that a brief glance at them will be very useful.

We begin by noticing that sound is produced by small but rapid variations of air pressure, and the particular qualities of any musical note depend on the form which these variations take. The ordinary instrument for measuring air pressure is the barometer or the barograph, which is a barometer which automatically registers air-pressure on a paper fixed to a moving drum. But these instruments are not nearly sensitive enough or suitable in other ways for measuring sound pressures. Other much more delicate instruments have been developed for that purpose. Most of the scientific work during the past few years has been done with a specially designed microphone which transforms variations of air-pressure into variations of electric current. Prof. Miller, however, used an instrument, invented by himself and known as the "Phonodeik," which actually draws the curve of pressure-change on a photographic film. There is one point about all these delicate instruments which should be noticed at the start, since it will lead us to important gramophonic conclusions later on. In instruments for measuring small quantities like the air-pressure changes producing sound, instrumental errors assume a vast importance. It follows that in order to find out what we want to know about sound we have to use instruments whose errors may invalidate all our conclusions; and in order to abolish or allow for these errors we require the knowledge we are setting out to obtain. This is a dilemma commonly met with in science. To describe how it is dealt with would take us too far into a discussion of the principles of scientific method; suffice it to say that the difficulty can be overcome with certainty though not without considerable trouble. Thus, for example, Prof. Miller spent months and months in examining and classifying the errors of the Phonodeik, until in the end he was able to use different combinations of horns and diaphragms and yet produce precisely the same analysis of any particular sound.

Fig. 1 is a drawing of the curve of pressure change produced by a note upon the E string of a violin. The

normal atmospheric pressure is represented by the horizontal line. Starting from the point marked 1, the pressure rises above normal up to a peak, falls again but not to normal, then rises to another peak, falls to normal and past normal down to a trough, and then comes back to normal again. After that the changes are repeated in precisely the same way. The curve is the same between the points 2 and 3 and between the points 3 and 4 as it is between 1 and 2. The number of these repetitions which occur every second is the *frequency* of the note. In this particular instance the frequency was 995. If you think of this for a moment you will realise what a delicate instrument is required to produce such a curve.

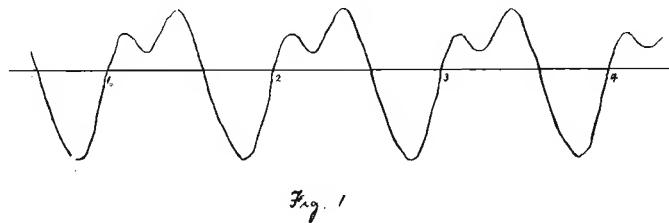


Fig. 1

Now the number of possible shapes of curve between the points 1 and 2 is obviously infinite, and every one of them will correspond to some musical sound. If we were obliged to study the qualities of various musical sounds by examining all these shapes in detail we should indeed be in a mess. Fortunately, however, that is not necessary, for it is found that any one of these curves can be obtained by adding together certain simpler curves all of the same general shape but with frequencies increasing by simple multiples. These simpler curves are those of notes given out by a tuning fork and by certain other instruments, and their shape is known, for mathematical reasons, as the "sine curve." All this means, of course, is that it should be possible to produce the same variations of air-pressure and therefore the same musical note as that from a violin string (or any other musical instrument) by sounding together tuning forks of suitable strengths. It will come as no surprise to gramophiles to learn that this can be done.

By this scientific simplification (though practical complication) the study of musical sounds is greatly facilitated. Every musical note is split up into a series of "tones" whose frequencies are multiples of the tone of lowest frequency, this latter tone being called

the fundamental and the others the overtones or harmonics. How many of these overtones are important in determining the quality of the musical note depends on the shape of the pressure-curve. It must not be assumed, however, that the most complicated-looking shapes are the most rich in overtones. They may be or they may not. Conversely, a seemingly simple shape may require a considerable number of overtones to represent it adequately. Until the pressure curves have actually been analysed mathematically into their "sine curve" constituents very

few conclusions can as a rule be drawn. I emphasize this point particularly since it has given rise to a lot of confusion in the past. To take a homely example, the shape of the twists and turns in the groove of a gramophone record (which is merely the pressure-curve of the sounds which the recording instrument picked up) may be extremely simple to the eye and yet it may represent the resultant of musical tones of bewildering complexity.

P. WILSON.



## CREDE EXPERTO

*By OUR EXPERT COMMITTEE*

SOUND-BOXES FOR ELECTRIC RECORDING—*continued.*

### *Stylus Mountings*—*continued.*

ONE other point about pivot mountings is worthy of notice. If there is to be a minimum of frictional resistance to motion the pivots and their bearings must be set most accurately—an accuracy of  $1/10,000$  of an inch is not too much to demand. But if they are set accurately for one set of weather conditions they will be out of adjustment for a different set. This is a small point, perhaps, when we remember that rubber gaskets and diaphragms—even mica—are likewise susceptible to atmospheric changes. But it is one whose consequences in the form of rattle have often been observed. It is interesting to note that in the Orthophonic Victrola this fault has been overcome. Here the shaft of the stylus-bar works in a ball race. The ball-containing case is of soft steel and the shaft itself is magnetized so that the balls are automatically held in position by magnetic pull.

Apart from the pivot mounting, the most usual form is that in which the stylus-bar is kept in contact, by means of springs, with knife-edges or conical points fixed to the front rim. This method has been criticised on the ground that the knife-edges or points are not sufficiently rigid and any "spring" in them introduces a series compliance, thereby diminishing the response in the bass. This, however, is not the serious objection it has been thought; the existence of the negative series compliance due to weight having been overlooked. The most common and most uninformed criticism is that metal springs are bound to give a metallic tone to the sound-box. This, however, is demonstrably false, and is, indeed, scarcely worthy of serious attention; metallic tone arises not so much from the particular *kinds* of material of which a sound-box is made as from their elastic qualities, and faulty design in using them. One other criticism is more serious. Unless the knife-edges and the slot in

which they work are carefully made and finished, quite a substantial frictional resistance may be set up, and this will entail loss of volume and detail in the reproduction. Most commercial sound-boxes suffer from this defect, and a marked improvement can be effected by simply sharpening and cleaning up the knife-edges.

At the moment we are undecided whether the actual angle of the knife-edges makes much difference provided it is kept within certain limits. Clearly it should be smaller than that of the slot in the stylus-plate, and it should not be so small as to make the knife-edges fragile. Our best sound-boxes happen to have rather short, stubby knife-edges, but whether there is any very special virtue in an angle of 75 degrees rather than one of 60 degrees we are not prepared to say. Our correspondent, Mr. Anson, asserts that there is a definite angle for the knife-edges of sound-boxes of the Exhibition type which gives the best results, and he has even gone so far as to have a special file made to give that angle and no other. At present, however, we are inclined to think that some of his results are rather fortuitous, and we await confirmation before proceeding to a definite conclusion. Statements from serious experimenters on this or on any other question dealt with in these articles will be welcome.

The height of the knife-edges from the shell and their length along the edge do seem to be worthy of attention. We have found short knife-edges to answer best, and a length along the edge of about 2 millimetres seems to give better results than either shorter or longer lengths. A greater length seems to increase friction too much, whilst a smaller one makes the edges too fragile. Conical points never seem to wear so well as small knife-edges, and they are certainly more difficult to make properly.

We have found several forms of springing to answer quite well. A good deal can be done with the Ex-

hibition or No. 2 springs simply by thinning them down a little and inserting rubber washers between them and the heads of the tension screws, the latter being adjusted as lightly as possible. The following methods, however, do better, though they require more care and labour:

1. *Bar Tension.* Fig. 8. Here flat springs are attached at one end to the stylus-plate and at the

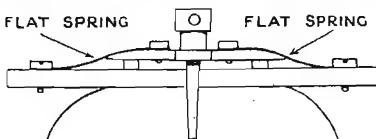


Fig. 8.

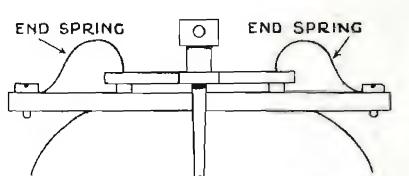


Fig. 9a.

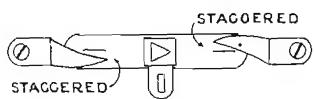


Fig. 9b.

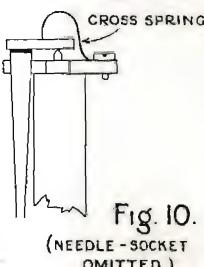


Fig. 10.

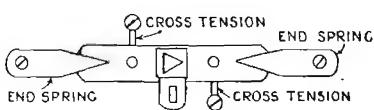


Fig. 11.

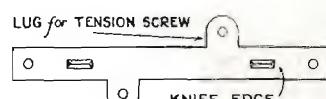


Fig. 11a.



Fig. 11b.

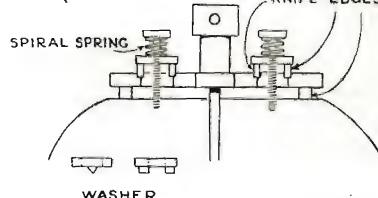


Fig. 12.

other to a bar, upon which the knife-edges are mounted, fixed under the front rim. By flexure these springs (which have to be quite thin, though thicker than "governor" springs) keep the stylus-plate firmly bedded on the knife-edges, and by torsion they oppose the overbalancing moment previously referred to. This method is very effective, but demands fine workmanship and is less easy of adjustment than some of the other methods.

2. *End Springs.* Figs. 9. Here the springs have

points which press the stylus-plate on to the knife-edges, their other ends being attached to a bar as in the last method. In order to obtain the necessary compliance the points are not in line with the knife-edges but are staggered one on each side. The amount of the stagger determines the amount of compliance introduced.

3. *Cross Springs.* Fig 10. This is a modification of method 2. The ordinary Exhibition knife-edge plate is used and the pointed springs are fastened down to the projections which formerly held the cross-tension screws, the points pressing on the stylus-plate as before. Strong springs are needed for this method. Its disadvantages consist in its limited field of adjustment, so that very accurate workmanship is required from the start, and in the difficulty which is experienced in preventing the stylus-plate from sliding along the knife-edges.

4. *Cross-tension with End Springs.* Figs. 11. This method is a combination of method 2 with cross-tension springs of the Exhibition type but much weaker. On the whole we have found this to be the most satisfactory method of all. It provides a much larger field for the final tuning than the others. The cross-tension springs are made by filing down the Exhibition springs to a width of one millimetre or less and thinning them a little as well. They are very fragile, but when mounted are protected to some extent by other parts of the sound-box. But they are far too weak to keep the stylus-plate firmly in contact with the knife-edges; hence the necessity for end springs. The seating for the end springs may be provided either by substituting a plate of the shape shown in Fig. 11(a) for the knife-edge plate on the Exhibition or No. 2 box, or by sweating lugs to the front rim of the box as shown in Fig. 11(b).

Many of the cheaper sound-boxes use spiral springs to keep the stylus-plate on the knife-edges. This method has always struck us as rather clumsy, though commercially simple, and we have hitherto thought it incapable of much improvement. We were wrong. The Perophone Company have just produced an ingenious modification which is a decided improvement, both mechanically and in its effect on the reproduction. They introduce small washers between the spiral springs and the stylus-plate. Each of these washers is provided with two knife-edges, which engage in the slots in the stylus-plate in line with the knife-edges attached to the rim of the sound-box. By this means the spiral springs can exert a strong pressure to keep the stylus-plate in firm contact without introducing strong side tensions or compliances of uncertain amount. The whole arrangement is shown in Fig. 12, and is a decided advance on ordinary commercial designs.

We are now testing three sound boxes made on this principle, and hope to give a full report of them next month. We also have under review a new Lockwood tone-arm which has interesting features.



*Photograph by]*

**ARNOLD BAX**

*[Herbert Lambert*

# NEGLECTED COMPOSERS

By W. A. CHISLETT

## V.—Arnold Bax

THE modest and retiring disposition of the subject of this short sketch probably accounts to some extent for his neglect until recent years by publishers and concert managers, and for his present neglect by all the recording companies. It seems almost incredible that a search of the catalogues of all the English companies should reveal only a solitary work by a composer of such undisputed attainments as those possessed by Arnold Bax. The National Gramophonic Society are about to point the way once more by issuing his *Oboe Quintet*, and as I have heard the "Test Prints" I can say in advance that these records are technically the finest yet made for the Society. This quintet was published in 1925, and, like all the composer's works produced during the last 15 years or so, is quite individual in style. Even those who are not attracted by the imaginative side of Bax's nature appeal cannot fail to admire this masterly display of contrapuntal skill. The work is in three-movement form, the last of which is great fun. More detailed comments on the various movements will be found in the new and admirable catalogue of N.G.S. records.

The only work available to the general public is *Mater ora filium*, which is sung by the Leeds Festival Choir of 1925 on H.M.V. D.1044-5. *Mater ora filium* is founded on an old carol in manuscript form in the library of Balliol College, Oxford, and is written for an unaccompanied double choir. The singing of this difficult and exacting work is magnificent. No trace of flattening of pitch can be found, and the sustained high notes of the sopranos and sonority of the basses are positively thrilling at times. The quality of the recording is also very fine, and if in one or two places perfect balance in this complicated texture of sound is not achieved, we have the consolation of knowing that this must be a rarity even at an actual performance. This music needs to be lived with before full appreciation can be realised, and it is in a work of this nature that the greatest benefit is derived from the gramophone. A copy of the score can be bought for a copper or two, and it is a great help towards complete understanding.

Having complained of the sad neglect by the recording companies, it is, I think, permissible to indicate a few works that might be recorded with advantage. To commence with, nothing could be better than a few of the songs and shorter piano pieces and the

quintet for harp and strings, which is in one-movement form and idyllic in character. From the works cast in larger moulds I should choose first of all the *Symphonic Variations*, for piano and orchestra, and the *Piano Quintet* which was completed in 1915. These are generally considered to be two of Bax's finest achievements, and in both instances the piano-part should be played by Miss Harriet Cohen if possible. From the orchestral music my choice would be either *The Garden of Fand* or *November Wooās*, and, in spite of the Editor's likeness to an enthusiastic but badly written letter by somebody who had just arrived at the seaside for his holidays, *Tintagel*. Finally, to make our selection reasonably representative, some choral music must be included, and the first work that suggests itself is *To the Name above every Name*, which was produced at the Worcester Festival in 1928.

The works I have mentioned are, of course, by no means all, and are merely suggestions based on my preference from those I have heard. For example, I should like to have included the tone poem *In the Faëry Hills*, the viola concerto and sonata, the 'cello-sonata, the short one-movement piano quartet, and one of the string quartets, as well as some more choral music and *Moy Mell*, an Irish Fantasy for two pianos. A moderate demand such as I have made, however, is more likely to be met than one so large as this would have been.

Arnold Bax, or to give him his full name, Arnold Edward Trevor Bax, comes of a gifted family, and was born in 1883. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music under Frederick Corder and Tobias Matthay, where he is reputed to have astonished everybody by his remarkable gift for reading at sight the most intricate scores. He rapidly acquired a similar fluency in composition, and it is for this reason, probably, that some of his earlier works were elaborate in detail but lacking in depth. He soon, however, curbed his youthful exuberance and became keenly self-critical. The result is that he has edited or withdrawn most of the earlier works and that the latter ones are subjected to a very severe criticism before being produced or published. His style is quite individual, and if the texture is rather involved and full of elaborations and decorations, it is nevertheless a rarity to find a note that could be dispensed with without loss.

W. A. CHISLETT.

## TRADE WINDS AND IDLE ZEPHYRS

Have you ordered an Index yet?  
Are you coming to Murdoch's on the 7th?

### *Competitions*

Perhaps it is a pity that our readers, who for years have been trained to ransack catalogues, try records innumerable, ponder, judge and make out lists in immaculate script, in order to enter for our competitions, for which the prizes are handsome only so far as modesty is always beautiful, should be offered so lazy a competition as that started by Messrs. Foyle in this number. It's all too easy. Our only hope is that some of our most regular, most patient and most unsuccessful competitors may pick up these prizes, not some dashing young idlers with a flair for herd instincts, who have never bothered to consider the Twenty Best Tunes.

### *Columbia*

The balance sheet of the Columbia Graphophone Company and the remarks of the Chairman in presenting it were enough to make the shares leap like young rams, and the Magic Notes are good currency of a fabulous frequency. After all, these profits in a year's trading are an unassailable proof of foresight and efficiency honoured and rewarded all over the world, and we add our congratulations to the chorus, feeling that we share, ever so humbly, in this deluge of success. Hail, Columbia! May it continue to hail.

### *Hannington's*

Visitors to Brighton—there's no need to tell residents—will find a great innovation at Hannington's, at the corner of East and North Streets—nothing less than an opulent gramophone department. It is in charge of Mr. Simms, whose little shop in Upper St. James's Street has long been the haunt of the connoisseur. Intelligent service is assured. The next thing that Brighton wants is a Gramophone Society.

### *The Bosch Recreator*

An American reader sends particulars of the Bosch Recreator, which costs twenty dollars and forms the bridge between gramophone and wireless; it is a pick-up and attachment, so that if you have a gramophone and a wireless set the Recreator will give you electrical reproduction of your records. Why do we have to be so patient waiting for a cheap Panatrophe in England?

### *Compensations.*

On the other hand, English-made records are in great and increasing demand in the United States. This is always being impressed on us. If an American reader pays us a visit to the London Office it is ten to one that she or he is on the way to Imhof's or on the way back, and the talk is always of English records to be taken back—and in such quantities as sound appalling to most of us—though presumably not to Messrs. Imhof.

### *The Gramophone Exchange*

Some idea of the use which can be made of *The Gramophone* is given in a letter from Jamaica which the Gramophone Exchange was good enough to forward to us. "I have pleasure in reporting the safe arrival in perfect condition of the eight parcels of records—102 discs. I have now played them all with critical attention and find the advice of *The Gramophone Review* to be a reliable guide." Drinks all round.

### *Apollo*

The new Apollo catalogue isn't so well got up as the last, but it is very handy in the form of a folder showing all the models at a glance, including the new "Super XII" portable at £3 10s. The prices throughout are notably low when the quality of Apollo finish and the good needle track alignment are considered.

### *Edison Bell Outing*

No less than six hundred and fifty people sat down to a sumptuous luncheon in the Dome at Brighton on June 18th, when the Edison Bell Company entertained its employés from the London and Huntingdon works. Fine weather blessed the joyous day, and the member of our staff who was very kindly invited to join the expedition turned up at the London office on Monday morning still pale and excited and wearing a small disc in his buttonhole on which was inscribed "Ogo Pogo."

### *The Convention*

Equally enjoyable and more prolonged was the Musical Convention at Folkestone during the previous week, when representatives of the music trades from all over the Kingdom came together to discuss things and meet each other under arrangements admirably organised by the Federation of British Music Industries officials. This agreeable form of clearing-house for ideas is practical as well as popular; and everyone is already talking of the next one, which is to be at Glasgow.

### *Cinema Organs*

A paragraph on this page last month contained a fairly serious misstatement about Wurlitzer organs. The organ at the Tivoli picture house in the Strand is not a Wurlitzer at all, but was built by an English firm, Messrs. Jardine and Co., Ltd. The chief cinemas where Wurlitzer organs are already installed are as follows: The Plaza and the New Gallery in London; Finsbury Park, Brixton Palladium and Canadian Palace, Tottenham; the West End and Lozell's Picture House, Birmingham; the Classic, Belfast, and the Picture Houses at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Sunderland, Walsall and Leicestershire.

With regard to the comparative merits of English and American cinema organs as judged by the gramophone records issued, we hope next month to publish an authoritative article from the pen of Mr. J. Morton Hutcheson, the Cinema Editor of that remarkably attractive publication *The Melody Maker*.

### *Sealed Records*

One of the hardy perennials of the correspondence files is the suggestion that records should be sold in a sealed envelope as a guarantee that they have not been used for demonstration purposes. In our more guileless days we passed the suggestion on to the manufacturers and were mildly snubbed. Very nice in theory, but quite impracticable.

However, Messrs. Goodwin and Tabb are doing it at 34, Percy Street, and every record which they sell is sealed up in its envelope. This guarantee is bound to attract the numerous readers who write to us confessing an anti-records-on-approval complex: and it will be interesting to see whether the practice spreads.

A slogan? Very easy. "Goodwin and Tabb—and don't forget the tab."

### Royal Warrants

It is easier to rub shoulders with Royalty in Imhof's dainty salon at 110, Oxford Street than anywhere else in London, and the spacious new Royal Warrant from H.M. the King of Spain which adorns the wall seems to fill the place. Congratulations on this distinction, and on the further distinction of heading the list of firms which supply our overseas readers with records! If we published some of the eulogies that we get about the House of Imhof we should endanger our independence: and our only wish is to pay tribute where tribute is due.

### Marionettes

Alas, it is too late to draw attention to the season of the Italian Marionettes at the New Scala Theatre, which ended on the 30th. For a fortnight the apathy of the public was remarkable, considering that by general consent of the critics the performance was one of the joys of London—a succession of delicate extravagances, lovely tunes and singing, and fantastic buffooneries. But latterly the houses have been crowded. The recollection of Bil Bal Bul on the tight rope or of the pianist in the drawing-room concert is imperishable, and Mr. Leigh Henry made the musical part of this traditionally Italian production very attractive to an English audience. If the rumoured continuation of the season by transference to the Garrick Theatre happens, we recommend a visit as the best of tonics.

### The Haslemere Festival

It is, however, not too late to remind people that the Haslemere Festival of Chamber Music takes place between August 22nd and September 3rd, and will as usual be the meeting place of all admirers of the early English music which the Dolmetsch family has revived. When is it going to be recorded for the gramophone? The Parlophone issue of two records of harpsichord and viola da gamba this month is a foretaste of what might be done.

### The Bradford Festival

The second Chamber Music Festival at Bradford is arranged for October 4th and 5th, with a most enticing programme. Particulars should be obtained at once from Messrs. Ibbs and Tillett, 124, Wigmore Street, W.1. Among other works the Beethoven Septet and the Schubert Octet loom large, while the Ravel Quartet and the Brahms Horn Trio are works which will be familiar especially to members of the National Gramophonic Society. Mr. Keith Douglas, the Hon. Secretary—who paid a visit to the London Office the other day with Mr. Arnold Bax to hear the test prints of the latter's Oboe Quintet—is to be congratulated on the variety and quality of his programme.

### Scottish Records

Scottish readers, who are aware of the many excellent Beltona records of their national music, may like to be reminded that Parlophone has also a separate catalogue of Scottish electric records. For some reason or other we have not had these for review, but if "Recordus," the gramophone critic of *The Scottish Musical Magazine*, may be trusted, there are records among them which no Scot would like to miss.

### Hyperbole

The following random reflections of a reader on the last number are worth quoting:

Adjectives, as usual, are sprinkled freely over the advertisement pages. "Amazing" wins, with five mentions, and "superb," "perfect" and "glorious" each occurs more than once. Also ran: "supreme," "great," "wonderful," "astonishing," and others. "Delightful" made a refreshing change. It is significant that one company, offering records by four singers described as "marvellous," "famous," "celebrated" and "great," just displayed the names alone

without epithets in the case of the two at the top of the bill. "Masterpiece," "revelation" and "supremacy" are common substantives. For greater grandiloquence we have a "seven league stride" answered on another page by "the longest stride in public favour," also "challenges the world," "the cream of the world-famous—celebrity recordings," and "the 8th wonder of the world." And yet the human race has a few men of genius left over for activities other than the gramophonic! It is a great relief not to have read lately that some singer has a "God-given voice": dash it all, I have one myself, but I do not go writing blurbs about it.

The mention, in "Trade Winds and Idle Zephyrs," as well as the advertisement, of the H.M.V. mobile recording outfit reminds me of a little problem, namely, how was the record of the "Gas shell Bombardment" made? (H.M.V. Catalogue, "Evergreen" section, No. 09308).

I take it the company has possessed some form of portable equipment for a good many years, although only with the adoption of the electrical process has it become really satisfactory. This record is not quite what we want though; what we do want is a record of a good old "evening hate" coming over (with of course a few "duds" in it for the sake of rhythm, as well as verisimilitude). Then having poked up the fire, we put on the record, and recline at ease with our feet up—with the additional satisfaction of being able to stop it at will. Perhaps the company will supply this want when the next war comes along.

### An Automatic Record Magazine

News comes from Tasmania of another form of record-changing mechanism to compete with the Victor "Automatic." It is called the "Waterworth," and from the accounts that have reached us it appears to be able to do everything with a pile of nine records—repeating any or all of them any number of times—except turning them over to play the other side. Naturally an electric motor and semi-permanent needles are required to do it justice. The most impressive passage in the account received is that the model hurriedly prepared for the Sydney Royal Agricultural Show at Easter was worked by assistants unfamiliar with its mechanism for the best part of a week without a single hitch in its performance.

### Dealers Note!

One of the best records with which to synchronise the Nightingale Solo record (H.M.V. B.2469) is the *Opening Andante* of the William Tell Overture on H.M.V. B.2437. If the records are started together it is astonishing how the nightingale seems to be waiting for a pause in the music.

### Recording News

It is good news that the Aldershot Tattoo was recorded this year by H.M.V.; and still better that Messrs. Casals, Cortot and Thibaud, whose presence packed the Palladium on two Sundays last month, found time for a visit to the Hayes Studio.

### A Complimentary Dinner

The dinner in honour of Mr. W. W. Cobbett at Prince's Restaurant on July 11th will be followed by some music appropriate to the occasion—notably by the Vaughan Williams *Phantasy Quintet* which Mr. Cobbett commissioned, and which will be played by the same players that made the two N.G.S. records for us. It will be a great gathering of musical friends.

### Great Composers

The *Daily Express* has a letter from Mr. Teignmouth Shore announcing the results of a German Gramophone Company's competition about the popularity of dead composers. Wagner wins easily: Bach is fairly well supported, but not by artists and teachers: Handel is chosen only by clergymen "and such like," and Chopin obtains his chief support from financiers.

## CORRESPONDENCE

*De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.*

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, The Gramophone, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of the manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

### A PROTEST.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I wonder if you could give an explanation of the extraordinarily garbled version of the *Turandot* arias just issued by the Parlophone Company. They are sung by Mme. Lotte Lehmann who, whether of her own free will or not, has so cut the arias about that one of them, "Del primo pianto," is almost unrecognisable: bars are left out in chunks, and phrases are altered most arbitrarily. The makers cannot complain that a 12in. record would not contain these arias uncut, as Polydor have already issued them, beautifully sung by Anne Roselle, in complete form . . .

London, W.C. 2.

Yours, etc.,  
IVOR NOVELLO.

### METHODS OF STORING RECORDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I spent a very pleasant few minutes over "Scrutator's" contribution to The Forum in your May issue. It caused me to wonder why it is that it has taken so long to invent a method of storing records so that it is possible to play any definite record without endless trouble and worry. All gramophone enthusiasts have passed through the first three phases mentioned by your contributor, and most of them, having slightly more intelligence than the average rabbit, certainly seek for something better.

Then we come to the fourth method—the "Pantomime." When I first saw this in a dealer's here in Glasgow, I was virtually overwhelmed by amazement and wonder. The dignified method of opening—no hurry or flurry or fuss, and all the records in full view of the audience, made me a convert immediately. But—"Scrutator's" memory served him a trick when he says, "revealing all the titles at once." Perhaps he meant "concealing," or maybe discs instead of titles—but I found that to find any record a process of lifting, dropping; lifting, dropping, had to be indulged in until the correct one was found. If your memory is not Pelmanised, and you have a large family and circle of friends—it might mean 150 lifts and 149 drops before you reached the winning post.

This horse was entered for the race, but it hasn't proved its claims—I suggest that "Scrutator" take this out again for a run round his paddock.

But I believe that I've found the winner of the Record Storing Derby! I've found it here in Glasgow, and as a proud citizen of that fair City, I think you should know of it. Perhaps you do, but it's a Glasgow product, and it seems to answer all the objections raised—so far.

The idea is that each record has its own pocket, but that all pockets are connected—you can't take it out and lose it. It "lies gaping" until the record is played and you shove it back! Each pocket has a number, and you just take the title, write it in the little index book which is part of the scheme and number it. Then if "The Persian Market" does happen to be on the same record as "Washboard Blues" or "Quartet in F,"

it doesn't matter. I would suggest that "Scrutator" mount this gee-gee. He should gallop past the post this time.

If I were a dealer, I would certainly respond to his invitation to send him a free, carriage free sample—but I'm not!

Glasgow.

"ROTATURCS."

[“Scrutator” replies:—“Rotaturs evidently does not read the rules of ‘The Forum,’ which restrict articles to 1,500 words, I had to stop at 1,499, which does not permit the full and exhaustive descriptions such matters are worthy of; however, his additions to my report are most valuable. I have not had the pleasure of seeing the Glasgow method. I have a great regard for Glasgow; it has a wonderful fire station and a magnificent Art Gallery, so that if the filing system comes up to scratch it should be good goods. But, alas, however much a series of ‘gaping pockets’ may delight a Scotsman (other people’s pockets, of course), the idea fills me with utter gloom; it is too reminiscent of the state my own pockets have been in since I became a gramophile to give me any pleasure.

“But I see the advertisement describes the matter as a ‘New Housing Scheme.’ Now that sounds something like; and if a subsidy can be arranged, and the money advanced through a building society on twenty years’ purchase the matter may be worth investigating.

“‘Rotaturs’ (dash the fellow, I have to keep spelling it backwards to see if I’ve got it right) does not say what supports the ‘gaping pockets.’ Are they hung on the clothes line or where? And how many gaping pockets make a complete file?

“Of course there is a snag in it, and I mistrust that index. What is to prevent anyone stuffing ‘My cutie’s due at two to two’ into the pocket which should rightly hold ‘the 3rd Rasoumovsky’?

“Alas, I cannot at the moment think that Glasgow has solved the problem.”]

### GERMAN SONGS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I have enjoyed and profited by Mr. Klein's articles on *lieder*. I realise that he has not tried to be exhaustive; nevertheless I feel that there are many important omissions in his list. My own collection of *lieder* is not large, but I have several which I believe worthy of mention alongside of those in his list.

The following are Polydors, and they are all easily obtainable in the United Kingdom:

*Meine Rose*, an exquisite and little known song of Schumann, sung by Scheidl, with *Two Grenadiers* on the reverse. The lovely *Botschaft* of Brahms, well done by van Endert, with as fine a rendition of *Feldeinsamkeit* on the other side as I have heard.

Culp has made a good record of Wolf's *Die Bekehrte*, one of the finest of the Goethe settings, with Strauss's *Ständchen* on the reverse.

One of the few good records of Färber-Strasse is Wolf's *In der Schatten meiner Locken*, coupled with Strauss' *Wiegenliedchen*, two delightful songs.

Grete Stückgold has made some interesting records, among others, Wolf's *Schlafendes Jesuskind* and Mahler's *Ich ging mit Lust*, both with the original orchestral accompaniments. There are several Strauss songs recorded with the composer at the piano. Hutt has done *Morgen* and *Breit über mein Haupt*, and Schlusnus *Ruhe meine Seele*, *Zueignung*, *Die Nacht*, *Das Geheimnis*, *Ich liebe dich* and *Heimkehr*. These are all good except the last, of which there is a much better record by Gentner-Fischer.

The Roeseler records are almost without exception excellent. She has done Strauss's *Einerlei*, *Cäcilie*, *Mit deinen blauen Augen*, and *Schlechtes Wetter*, also Brahms's *Der Tod das ist die kuhle Nacht*.

Then, those two Strauss dramas in miniature, *Die heiligen drei Königen aus dem Morgenland* and *Pilgers Morgenlied* are given excellent interpretations by Elisabeth Schumann and Heinrich Rehkemper respectively, with the original orchestral accompaniments.

There are also a number of excellent records which may not be so readily available, still should not be omitted. Among them I would like to mention: *Der Doppelgänger*, Schubert's dramatic Heine setting, sung by Julius Gless (Vox). Schubert's lovely and characteristic *Die Post*, sung by Ivogün (Brunswick). *Wie bist du meine Königin* of Brahms, sung by Herman Schey (Vox). Wolf's *Zur Ruh, zur Ruh*, sung by Werrenrath (Victor) with Strauss's *Allerseelen* on the other side.

Strauss's *Seitdem dein Aug' in meines schaute* sung by Steiner, who has also made *Freundliche Vision*, *Winterweihe*, *Als mir dien Lied erklang*, *Cäcilie* and *Ständchen*. Some of the latter are not so well recorded. There is a much better record of the lovely *Winterweihe* by Jadlowker (Polydor). The Steiner records are made by the German Parlophone Co.

Yours very truly,

New York City.

HENRY S. GERSTLE.

#### FROM FAR AWAY.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I have been a contributor, through my news-agent, to your excellent journal THE GRAMOPHONE for over a year, and my friends and I out in the "Bush" being gramophiles are more than interested. At periodical gramophone recitals held at Wellington Town Hall, Mr. Compton Mackenzie's name, and criticisms, as well as the journal, are frequently referred to. The disappointing point is that we are unavoidably two months behind by the time we receive our copies. A short while back we witnessed quite a good "Maori Haka" which was danced by a dozen or so natives. Their enthusiasm was worked up by the H.M.V. "Fire Music" record. After a day's rounding up, in the Waikato bush country, and lying around the camp fire, our new H.M.V. Table Model is the entertainment for miles around, and you would be surprised how far some of the "Pakehas" and natives will track to hear it. Now regarding this "necessary gadget" the *Lifebelt* and *Weight Adjuster*, we are most anxious to procure one, but we have tried all over North and South Islands without success. Is there no agent in this country? . . . I may say that I would be more than proud to be the first N.Z. gramophile to demonstrate this new invention.

I would enclose remittance for same, but Te Amamutu is the nearest post-hole, and we cannot get in until the shearing season is over. Then again N.Z. notes are no use at Home.

Anyway, I can vouch for the fact that the six-weekly delivery of your journal THE GRAMOPHONE is far more looked forward to than the Melbourne Cup winner!

Wishing you tremendous success, and with all kind wishes,

Yours very sincerely,

("the N.Z. Musical bush whackers")

Wellington, N.Z.

CHARLES A. HOLDEN.

[Probably not meant for publication, but too good to be filed away without a public word of thanks to our correspondent.—ED.]

#### ARMCHAIR PHONATICS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Without taking too seriously the plaint of F. W. H., printed in your last issue, may I just say how much I believe serious gramophiles appreciate Mr. P. Wilson's researches? I have had the privilege of observing and, at his

invitation, comparing and commenting on the results of his most recent experiments, and I should like to pay tribute to the broad basis of his scientific inquiries and to the open-minded and cheerfully candid attitude in which he seeks for truth. He travels hopefully, and is already arriving. Will he carry with him as fellow-inquirers our friends the dealers, of whom F. W. H. is one? All who love science and music will hope so; but in some twenty years of close observation of the retail music trade I do not find very many signs of its sympathy with an understanding of the value of scientific investigation. Every business man has much to do, one knows, in building up his trade, and may feel that the mere making of a living occupies all his energies; but there are other things for the wide-eyed citizen of the modern world to consider, and it is not unfair to expect the music trade to realise (as, with some few happy exceptions, it has not yet fully realised) both its artistic and its scientific obligations. Mr. Wilson and his colleagues are serving us all, however great or small our knowledge of or interest in the science of sound-reproduction. In thus bearing a notable and often laborious part in making the gramophone world fit for intelligent listeners, they deserve full attention, courteous consideration, and hearty thanks, of which I hope they may be widely assured by your readers.

Yours faithfully.

London.

K. K.

#### THE WILSON HORN.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I should like to associate myself with the remarks of Mr. L. H. Kingsley in his letter to you in the June number. The Wilson Horn is indeed superb. Mine is in a H.M.V. No. 25 model, and with a Virtz sound box, the results are simply astonishing—quite unlike the usually accepted gramophone tone—in its extraordinary naturalness and purity, vocal or instrumental.

Radio put through it is indeed a revelation, and I wish all users of this medium would waive "the look of the thing" for the "sound of the thing." Handsome is, &c., &c.

Yours faithfully,

Church Stretton.

W. A. HUDSON.

[We can only find room for one of these confirmatory letters, but thank the other correspondents none the less.—ED.]

#### OMNE IGNOTUM PRO RIDICULO.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I am glad your technical contributors are not to be denied at least the possession of a sense of humour. I thoroughly enjoyed F. W. H.'s letter last month; perhaps not so much as my wife, but still . . . Some of the tricks we get up to really are rather ludicrous. By "we," of course I mean myself and my friends, not my wife and family, who are usually amused but interested spectators. And why should not we try to convey the humour of the situation as well as its more pertinent aspects? I wish I could only describe some of the letters and suggestions I receive from readers!

I should have thought it unnecessary, however, to mention that even the seemingly ludicrous may have a definite human, scientific and even practical and commercial value. You have to analyse before you can synthesise. Galvani's frogs were ludicrous enough, and from the same standpoint so also were Sir Ronald Ross's mosquitoes. And, as Franklin remarked, of what use is a new-born baby?

My article was only a sketchy introduction to a difficult and tantalising subject: difficult and tantalising, principally because of the number of variations which are possible and of the psychological factors which have to be allowed for. But

there can be little doubt of the importance of the matter to the serious gramophile, and I hope to be able to return to it on a future occasion. The following quotation from Dr. Crandall's recent book on the *Theory of Vibrating Systems and Sound* (p. 213) will serve my present purpose :—

" Recently great advances have been made in recording and reproducing music on the phonograph with the result that from the standpoint of frequency distortion (that is, resonance, or the undue suppression of high or low frequency sounds), the quality of the reproduction is nearly ideal . . . . These improvements bring forcibly to the attention certain requirements from the standpoint of Architectural Acoustics in the making and the use of such records, in order to obtain the illusion of exact reproduction. Clearly the best result is obtained if, when the record is reproduced, the inherent quality in the record and the accompanying effect due to the acoustics of the listening room exactly duplicate the effect that would have been obtained if the original sound had been produced in the regular way in a room of optimum reverberation time. The most straightforward way of insuring this result is to record the original sound with no accompanying reverberation whatsoever, and then to play the record (which is by hypothesis a faithful copy of the original sound) in a room of exactly the acoustic properties demanded for best appreciation of the original sound itself. This is a counsel of perfection and of course assumes that the user of the phonograph is prepared to take some care in adjusting listening conditions. If this is not practicable, the alternative is for the record maker, at the cost of considerable experimental work, to make less perfect records which are, by a compromise of some kind, better adapted to universal use under average listening conditions. The point we wish to make is that the application of acoustic principles both to recording and reproduction is now appreciated by the phonograph makers ; every effort is made to control recording conditions and insure a good copy of the original sound ; but, granting all this, the best results will not be obtained in final reproduction without intelligent co-operation on the part of the user of the phonograph, in adjusting the loudness of the sound and the reverberation time of the listening room."

May I be permitted to add, with all humility, that I am firmly convinced that some of your remarks in recent issues have not done justice to H.M.V. recordings ? I do not refer to musical interpretation or anything of that sort (*Ne sutor ultra crepidam !*), but merely to the qualities of the sounds reproduced. The problem is this. The reproduction we hear is the product of at least four factors : recording room, recording instrument, reproducing instrument, and reproducing room. How are we to dissociate the last two from the others and criticise the records only ? Are we to take as standard the best reproduction we know, or are we to judge on the basis of the results which an ordinary member of the general public may be expected to get ? We surely cannot take the latter in view of the variety of different reproducers which are spread about. But as regards the former, I find that the most minute change in the adjustment of a good sound-box is capable of making a vast difference in the reproduction. It is stated, for example, that H.M.V. strings are apt to be metallic and edgy. But as I demonstrated to your reviewer "W.A.C." a short time ago, all that can be removed by adjustment of the sound-box. Are we then to say that the recording is faulty, but that it is possible to correct it in the sound-box ? Or are we to say that the reproducer which gives the shrill edge on H.M.V. strings is faulty and that the records on which it does not give a shrill edge are faulty too ? Who knows ?

Notwithstanding these difficulties, I think it is possible to come to a definite conclusion that H.M.V. records are nowadays consistently good, whilst those of other companies vary considerably. (I except the Oxford and Cambridge Choir records which C. M. C. praised so much last month ; they were evidently some of the first records to be made by the mobile equipment, and, to my mind, they are adequately described by their titles.) In

science and the commercial applications of science consistency is one of the tests of correctness.

The lot of a record reviewer in these days is truly not a happy one. I would not have ventured on these remarks were it not that many gramophiles do not seem to realise how really difficult the job must be ; and that, on the whole, something rather less than justice has been done to our premier recording company.

Yours truly,

P. WILSON.

London.

#### GOOD SERVICE.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE).

DEAR SIR,—I should like to draw your attention to the following as treatment deserving of mention. I ordered records of the Good Friday Music from Parsifal, the first record of which proved to be defective inasmuch that after the first inch or so, an abominable scratch spoiled reproduction, and this continued to the end, the second side and the second record being quite free from this. As the dealer had never tried them over, one could not blame him for the fault, nor expect him to take the record back, yet the whole thing was spoilt on this account. He suggested writing to the Company, which I did. By return they asked me to send the record back for examination and report. Within two days of returning it came a reply that I had received what they called a "cold pressing," which they very much regretted, adding that they had instructed their Factory to replace it with a perfect one. The next day this arrived, packed in a wooden box, protected in every seeming way possible.

The trouble and care taken to ensure satisfaction, coupled with the promptness, courtesy, and general tone of the letters—and all for the sake of one record—impresses me very much. Such after-sales service is undreamed of by many big houses, and I felt it nothing short of my solemn duty to make it known to you.

I feel now that I can always order from the list and be absolutely sure of not being let down. I cannot feel the same in all other cases.

Yours faithfully,

R. A. NETHERCOT.

Swindon.

P.S.—I suppose it is unnecessary to add that there is no ulterior motive behind this.—R. A. N.

[We cannot forego the pleasure of publishing this letter, but have omitted the name of the Company referred to for obvious reasons. Unlike our correspondent, we believe that the same splendid after-sales service is the rule rather than the exception, wherever records or gramophones are concerned.—ED.]

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